

THE  
REMAINS  
OF  
Mr. *Joseph Barrett*  
Son of the Reverend  
Mr. JOHN BARRETT  
Minister of the Gospel  
AT  
NOTTINGHAM.

BEING  
The Second PART taken out of  
an Exact DIARY written by  
his own Hand.

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L O N D O N :

Printed for *Tho. Parkhurst*, and are to be  
Sold by him at the *Bible* and *Three*  
*Crowns* in *Cheapside*, and *John Richards*  
at *Nottingham*. 1700.

~~19 1/2, 131, 27~~

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TO THE  
READER.

**I**F you have conversed with the Former Volumn of this eminently holy Man's Papers, we reckon, we need do no more to enuite you to a serious delightful Perusal of this Second, then to assure You, that they are more of Mr. Joseph Barrett's Papers, and indeed we scarce need to certify that neither, themselves do testify it, they have the same Rich Vein of more then ordinary Judiciousness, Savouringness and Spirituality running through and sparkling in them as did in the Former, the same marks of eminent Impresses and large Supplies of God's Spirit, and the same signs of a Man very much in Communion with God, and inflamed with Love to and Zeal for God, of one

To the R E A D E R.

*much in Heaven during the little time he was here on Earth, his True, and somewhat peculiar Character.*

*Which makes it not strange at all that he was so soon removed to Heaven, the place his Heart was so much in, and he drove such a great Trade with, and that he was so soon removed from Earth a place so grievous to him, by reason of its aboundings Iniquity, and withbeld and which vexed his Righteous Soul from day to day, in seeing and hearing its ungodly Deeds; nothing revived him more than the Success of his Projects for Christ and Souls.*

*And in imitation of his Blessed Master (whom we never find weeping for any of his own, though peculiarly heavy Affliction and sore Sufferings, but only for either the Sins or Calamities of others) nothing grieved him more than to see the hardness of Men's Hearts, their opposition to the Blessed Jesus, and the sad prospect this gave*  
of

To the R E A D E R.

*of Judgment upon Them and the Nation. If an ill Spirit broke out with any Prevalence, and the Interest of Religion seemed to give ground; if any Adventure of Prayer, many of which he made, and put others upon making, and blessed be God with good Success; but if at any time, any such Adventure did not make the return he hoped for, how near did it go to his Heart, out of his Apprehension of God's Displeasure, and fear of this precious Duty of Prayer come into Discredit: This grieved him much more than the failure of any the greatest Adventurers in the Business of his secular Calling. Apprehensions of God's being provoked and displeased, and fears of the Consequences of it, sat heavy, made deep Impressions upon the Spirit of this Josiah, whose Heart through Grace was peculiarly soft and tender; the Zeal of God's house did eat him up.*

*Several things of his, and (upon many Accounts we have reason to conclude)*

## To the R E A D E R.

clude) valuable ones, are locked up from being publickly useful, by being written in Characters : But blessed be God that so ordered it, that so much of the good Treasure of this Scribe instructed to the Kingdom of Heaven, this well furnished Housholder is left unlocked, and stands open for publick Use. The things this Second Volumn consists of, we shall not stay you in giving you our Judgments particularly of them ; but leave you to make a Judgment of them your Selves, when you have perused them. Only it may not be amiss to give some brief Account of the nature and method of those Conferences, that one of these Tracts hath relation to. The Reader therefore is desired to take Notice. That in the Congregation (of which this Holy Man was a Member,) there is a meeting of several Christians once a Week from Five to Seven of the Clock at Night, for mutual Edification, which is spent only in Prayer, repeating of Sermons, and singing of Psams, on those Nights when the Ministers are not present. But usually once in a Month the Ministers are there, and then some practical Question or Case of Conscience is propounded and discoursed of, and every Man present hath liberty to propound his own Thoughts, and speak his own Experience. Prayer begin and together with a Psalm or Spiritual Hymn, closes the Exercise : The Minister opens the Question, and

## TO THE READER.

*and in the Close sums up the substance of what hath been discoursed of. These meetings this good Man was a great Lover and Promoter of, yet such was his great Modesty, that he seldom spoke himself, but wrote his Thought and put them into a Friends hands (with a charge of privacy as to the Author) who read them towards the close of the Exercise: Having thus acquainted you with what we think necessary, in relation to these Papers, we recommend them to your serious powerful Perusal, you and them to the Blessing of the God of all Grace, and our Selves to your Prayers, who desire help through your Prayers, and the supply of the Spirit, he obtain help to be*

The furtherers of your Faith,  
and helpers of your Joy in the Lord;

*August, 22.  
1699.*

*John Whitlock,  
Jo. Whitlock Junior.*

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

**T**HE first Account of Mr. *Joseph Barrett's* Life printed, contains Eight Chapters, which is in several Hands single; therefor these his Remains begins Chapter the Ninth.

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C H A P. IX.  
Q U E S T I O N I.

*How may a man know that he is led, or acted by the Spirit of God?*

**B**Efore I answer directly, I beg leave to lay down a few things, which I think may tend a little to clear the question, and to prevent Mistakes about it; As,

1. That there must be a principal of Spiritual Life infused into the Soul in the Work of Regeneration, before a Man can be said to be lead by the Spirit. By Nature we are all Men and Women of another Spirit, lead and acted by that contrary Spirit *which works in the Children of Disobedience*, Eph. 2. 2. Rom. 8. 14. *For as many as are lead by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God*, Gal. 5. 25. *If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit*; There must be Spiritual Life before there can be any Spiritual Motion.

2. That they Regenerate themselves tho' they are renewed in every part, yet they are renewed but in part; They have in them while they are in this Life, Flesh as well as Spirit; and while we have Sin in us, it will be acting its Part, the flesh will be lusting against the Spirit; Rom. 7. 21. *I find then a Law that when I would do good, evil is present with me*, Gal. 5. 17. *For the Flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh*;

B

and



and these are contrary the one unto the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

3. That as men easily may, so they are very prone to mistake in this Point.

1. Bad Men; *Saul* when in his persecuting Course, before his Conversion, he verily thought that he was in the way of his duty, and so following the Motions of Gods Spirit, *Act. 26. 9.* But we see how his Mind was changed afterwards; that which before he took for Holy Zeal, a Fruit of the Spirit, he then saw to be no better than exceeding madness.

2. Good Men; when they seriously consider what depends upon this Point; *Rom. 8. 9. Now if any Man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his, v. 13. For if ye live after the Flesh, ye shall dye:* And when they think of the deceitfulness of their own hearts, *Jer. 17. 9. The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it.* And when they farther consider how prevalent the remaining fleshly interest is in their hearts and lives, this makes many a gracious Soul tremble when it comes to decide the Point, and sometimes to bring in a false Judgment against it self, unless that blessed Spirit shine upon it.

4. That mistakes here are very dangerous and mischievous; That Man who thinks he hath, and is lead by the Spirit, and is not, woe to him, for he is a lost Man, if he find not out his mistake before Death and Judgment deceive him.

And then a mistake on the other hand, will cause the poor Soul to drive on but heavily and uncomfortably in the way of its duty, tho' its Estate in the main may be safe? Have none of

us cause to know the Heart of such in this matter? Now to the Case propounded I would answer in general thus.

I think that Man, and he alone is lead by the Spirit, the habitual and prevailing bent of whose Heart, the main Scope and drift of whose Life is Spiritual. As for particular marks, I shall content my self with a very few, which I take to be safe and scriptural; so,

1. Such as are lead by the Spirit of God, they are by him free from the ruling Power of the Flesh; Rom. 8. 1, 2. *There is therefore now no Condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit; For the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the Law of Sin and Death.* Gal. 5. 16. This I say then, *walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the Lusts of the Flesh;* Walking after the Spirit, and walking after the Flesh are directly opposed in Scripture: such, they sin still; alas, that is a sad truth which cannot be denied, for there is not a just man upon earth that doth good and sinneth not, *Ecl. 7. 20.* yet he that is born of God, he doth not, he cannot commit Sin; *Job. 1. 3, 9.* He lives not in the ruling Love and practice of Sin; He can in some Measure say what the Apostle [*For that which I do I allow not, for that which I would that do I not, but what I hate that do I,* Rom. 7. 15.

2. They are such as have solemnly taken the holy Spirit for their Guide, and given up themselves to his Conduct; *They were baptized into his Name,* Mat. 28. 19. And every time they do renew the Covenant, they do sincerely and afresh renew their Obligations to obey and fol-

low him. Before Conversion they rejected him, his Counsels and Ways, and were only for following the Inclinations of their own evil Hearts, and the Course of this World : But now they have made a better choice ; They desire he would teach, lead and guide them ; such Expressions are very frequent ; And they have an Ear to hear, and an Heart to follow him ; Joh. 10. 3, 4. — *And the Sheep hear his Voice, and he calleth his own Sheep by Name, and he leadeth them out ; and when he putteth forth his own Sheep, he goeth before them, and the Sheep follow him, for they know his Voice ;* By the Spirit it is that great Shepheard teacheth his Sheep to know his Voice, by him he calleth them both to, and after him.

3. They are such as have chosen the Word of God for their Rule ; In the Word it is that the Spirit Speaketh to the Churches, Rev. 2. 7. In the Word he hath chalked out the Paths of Holiness, wherein he leadeth such as he hath made willing to follow him.

And they pray with David, [*Lord teach me thy Statutes*, Psal. 119. 12. *Let me not wander from thy Commandments* ; Indeed the Flesh will be resisting and rebelling, endeavouring to stop them in, or to turn them out of the way, which will cause them to take many a false Step ; But yet, as Rom. 7. 22. *They delight in the Law of God after the inward Man* : In the bent of their renewed Mind and will they delight in it, and desire to obey it perfectly, and allow not themselves in the breach of any part thereof.

4. Such as are lead by the Spirit, their Motion is free and voluntary, not by force and constraint ;

constraint; They are lead, not haled or driven; Joh. 10. 3, 4. *He calleth them by Name, and leads them out, and goeth before them, and they follow him*; They are a willing People, Psal. 110. 3. 1 Cor. 4. *Draw me, and we will run after thee*; Indeed a Partical Unwillingness will be found in the best while here; while we have Flesh in us, it will be drawing another way; But yet, Holiness is this Mans choice; And when he is in a holy Frame and Course, he is as in his Element: The habitual prevailing bent of his Heart is for a Course of Holiness, and this appears in the main Scope and drift of his Life; and this I think doth denominate us what we are, and that therefore by it we may safely judge of our selves.

## QUESTION II.

*How may we come to find out and know what are our special sins, and what means are to be used for the Mortification of them?*

The question before us Consists of two Parts.

1. How may we come to find out and know what are our special Sins?

2. What means are to be used for the Mortification of them?

As to the former of these, I shall give you my poor thoughts thus.

Tho' we have in our Hearts by Nature that which is the Seed and Principle of all Sin, and tho' the unregenerate are under the Power and the Dominion of every Lust, yet they, yea and the godly themselves, who sincerely desire and endeavour to disown and renounce all Sin, yet even they as well as the former have some one

sin or more which may in a peculiar manner be called their iniquity, their special sin ; And in order to the discovery what this sin, or sins are, I think,

1. Our work lieth with God ; and,

2. With our own Hearts and Consciences ; and so, 1. We must be very sincere and importunate with God in Prayer, that he would please to discover and make them known unto us ; *The heart is deep, the Deceitfulness and Wickedness of it exceeding great, who can know it ? Jer. 17. 9.* We are naturally prone more easily to spy out Faults in others then in our selves, and the great Traitor (our special sin) lieth closest of all, and while the Devil and our Flesh can hinder it, we shall not find him out : And therefore we have need to pray with *Job, 13. chap. 23. Make me to know my Transgression and my Sin.*

2. When this is done, we must seriously endeavour to bring our Hearts to the test, by some such Questions as these.

1. What Sins are they that we are most strongly enclined unto, and of all others most loath to leave or part with, our right Eye, and right Hand sins, these are our spiritual Sins, *Mat. 5. 29, 30.* The young Man that came to our Lord, *Mat. 19.* When he brought him to that trying Point about his Master Sin, which appears to be covetousness or worldliness, the news of parting with that makes him go away sorrowful, he rather choosing to take his leave of an only Saviour.

2. What sins are they that we are most frequently and violently tempted to, the Temptations unto which we have least Power to resist, and

and so consequently are oftent foiled by ? The Devil studies this Point more (I am afraid) then many of us do, I mean it mostly of my self ; and when he hath by diligent Observation found out which way our Inclinations carry us most strongly, he suits his baits thereto ; And if we observe, we shall find his strongest batteries and fiercest Assaults to be on this our blind, our weakest side ; and so we may observe, that in these Assaults we ordinarily come off worst, many times halting, if sometimes we get not broken bones ; methinks this head is clear in it self.

3. What Sins are they which we find our Hearts most prone to think of, even when outward Objects are not before us, to prompt us to such thoughts ? What Sins are they that the thoughts that come most freely and immediately from our Hearts are employed about ? Sometimes these Sins will appear at the Mouth (*For out of the abundance of the Heart the Mouth speaketh,*) Mat. 12. 34. And as one of Jobs Friends, chargeth him. [*Thy mouth uttereth thine iniquity.*] But I think this is a more certain and constant Sign ; [*For as a man thinketh in his heart, even so is he.*]

4. What Sins are they that we find our selves prone to entertain in our Thoughts, with greatest Pleasure and Delight ?

What sin is it that we are apt to conceive the greatest Sweetness in ? we may mark him out, or that's he ; Tho' sin is an evil and bitter thing in it self, and in its Effects, and tho' it be so to the real apprehension of a Sincere Heart, yet in spite of it, the Flesh will be contradicting it herein, especially in relation to its great Master Lust.



5. What Sins are they that we are prone to make most Provision for, that we may fulfil the Desires and Lusts thereof? Tho' others will be craving, and e're while crying feed me, and feed me, yet if we observe, we shall find we have the most frequent, impetuous, imperious calls from our Master Sins; The Flesh will be from time to time prompting us most of all to plot and contrive and drudge for them; These will crave and expect the largest allowance, or *Benjamins Mels*, and will be most unwearied and impudent in it.

6. What Sins are they which Conscience is want to give us the severest Checks for, when it is at at any time soundly awakened either by the Ministry of the Word, or under some smart Affliction; Conscience will speak and strike home at such a time, and then it is most likely to hit upon the right vein; *Act. 2. 37. Gen. 42. 21. And they said one to another, we are verily guilty concerning our Brother, in that we saw the anguish of his Soul, when he besought us, and we would not here: therefore is this distress come upon us.*

Now to the second part of the question, which indeed contains in it the harder part of our work.

2. Having found out what are our special Sins, what means are to be used for the Mortification of them.

1. Prayer is one Special means to be improv'd here; whatever spiritual work we take in hand, one great End of it lieth with God; And a Christian will fight best upon his Knees; Hereby we may engage God and his sufficient grace on our side, and so we may groundedly hope for  
Victory;



Victory; we have the Apostle Paul's course and success here, 1 Cor. 12. 7, 8, 9.

But 1. We must see that in our Confessions here, we be particular, full, free and open hearted with God; we must open our wound if we would have cure; while we are for' hiding and concealing them nothing will be done, as it thereby appears we have no mind it should.

2. We must see we lay the greatest load of Sorrow upon them, and thereby endeavour to get them more imbittered to us.

3. We must see we be very sincere and very fervent in our desires after that Grace which alone can enable us to do the work; they will not regard the biggest, the hardest Words that we can give them, and they would but make a mock at such striplings as we are, if we take the Field without our Captain; if ever we give them any killing blow, it must be by God's strengthning our Arm; and therefore we must not Pray as if we feared least the Lord should take us at our word, or least he should do it too soon, or like those that are indifferent in the Matter, seeing if they die not by our hands, our life must go for their life.

2. We should improve the Word of God here, which is the Sword of the Spirit, turning the Edge the Point of it against our special Sins; in some Sense we may allude to the King of Syria's Charge to his Officers, 1 King. 22.

31. *Fight neither with small nor great, save only with these princely Lusts*; I mean, that we make it our particular Care both in the reading and hearing of the Word, especially to observe, lay up, and apply home to our selves those Commands, Reproofs,

Reproofs, Promises and Threatnings which have a peculiar relation to our special Sins; could we but rightly manage this weapon, it would do great execution.

3. We should dilligently improve our covenant Transactions with God this way. And 1. Our Baptism; in that Ordinance by the Hands of our Parents we took the Lord's lifting Money, whereby we were engaged to Fight against all his Enemies, but especially against these his chief Competitors and grand Rebels: And this Act of our Parents for us, we have since solemnly made our own, or at least ought to have done it. 2. Such of us as have been made partakers of that precious Ordinance of the Lord's Supper, we both may and ought especially to improve it this way; O the Blood of Christ, nothing like it for the killing of a Lust; we may say of it as *David of Goliath's Sword*, 1 Sam. 21. 9. *There is none like that, give it me*; this is a proved tri'd weapon.

3. When we do at any time afresh renew our Covenant with God, either in that Ordinance, or upon other Occasions, we should do it with a special Eye to these our special Sins. And that,

1. By labouring here especially to lay hold on, plead and improve the Covenant on God's part; one main branch of the Covenant is, that he will subdue our iniquity, *Mic. 7. 19.* Lord, let these especially feel the Weight of thine Hand!

2. By laying our selves under particular fresh and strong Engagements against them; we shall find we need the most strong and twisted Cords,

Cords, when we would bind these *Sampson* Lusts.

4. We must fix and set our Resolutions as against all Sin in General, so against these in special; as a good Souldier resolves either to win the Field, or lay his Bones there, so we should be at a Point with them; but while we are wavering and halting between two Opinions, there is no hope we should make any work of it.

5. We must be careful we make no provision for them, and so as much as possibly we can, avoid those things which we have found to be occasions of, or temptations to them; and by this means endeavour to ruine and starve them out; we must with-draw, with-hold the Fuel, if we would have the Fire out.

6. Here we must be most strict and constant in our watch; here it is that our greatest Danger lieth; here we are in most danger of being betrayed, here Satan is most likely to make his Breach: And if we be careless and secure here, we shall certainly be loosing ground; though we should be no where secure, because no where out of Danger, yet we should set the strongest Guard and strictest Watch at the weakest Part of our Wall.

7. We must labour to grow in all Grace, but above all in those that are most directly opposite unto our special Sins; we should desire and labour hard for some peculiar Eminency in those Graces, and could we but attain this, it would prove an excellent Means; for this is certain, as Grace gets up, Sin must down; as in Nature, contraries will expel each other, so it is here, the more we grow in humility,  
the

the more that Pride will be laid in the dust; the same we may say of any other Sin: Can none of us set to our *Probatum est*.

8. If ordinary Means fail, we must then betake our selves to extraordinary, I mean to solemn Fasting and Prayer; as our Lord said of that Devil the Disciples could not Cast-out, *Math. 17. 21. This kind goeth not out but by fasting and prayer*; so (as some of our beloved Ministers have observed) there are some Lusts that will not otherwise be Cast-out.

Now could we but thus do, and after all, humbly and believingly depend upon the free and sovereign Grace of God in Christ; we might verily hope that these *Goliath's* (how much soever they may have defied us hitherto) should not be able to stand before us.

3. What Considerations should move us to endeavour the Mortification of them? *Ans.*

1. The Lord doth indispensibly require it, *Col. 3. 5. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth—*. This with other the like Scripture precepts are especially applicable here; not a limb of the old Man, that by the Lord's leave should be spared, but especially we should lay at his Heart, at those Parts and Members of him where his life and strength mainly lieth [put away (saith *Samuel*) the strange Gods and *Astarte*]; it is probable that was one of their chief and most provoking Idols, and therefore named in particular. And I think one may safely say, That Man who doth not sincerely desire and endeavour in Obedience to such Commands, the Mortification of his special Sins, the putting away of his

his *Astaroth*, he doth not, nor can he be said sincerely to obey them as to any of the rest.

2. Though a single Command from God, be enough to make this or any other thing our indispensable Duty, yet here we are under other as strong Ties and Obligations as can be imagined; we are the Lord's by manifold Right; how many things he hath to ground a most just and unquestionable claim to us and our service upon? And farther, we are his by our own (and I hope many of us may say sincere and hearty) Consent; we have sworn unto the Lord, and may not go back; now it is a thing in it self impossible that we should at the same time habitually and prevailingly love and serve God and Sin too; no Man can Serve two Master's so contrary; and therefore we must endeavour the Mortification of them, as we would not be guilty of the most horrid Perfidiousness, as well as Disloyalty and Rebellion, by siding with these Tyrannical Usurpers (which as such we have at least in pretence renounced) against him that is our most rightful, gracious and solemnly avowed Sovereign Lord.

3. Without this we can have no clear sound and comfortable Evidence of the sincerity and integrity of our Hearts; this seems clearly intimated, *Psal. 18. 23. I was also upright before him, and I kept my self from mine iniquity*; and it is a thing very clear in it self, for that Opposition against Sin which is right, it is and must be against Sin as it is Sin, that is, as it is so directly contrary to the most holy Nature, Will and Law of God, and so directly opposite to his Glory; and so consequently it must be against  
all



all Sin, and especially against our special Sins: and therefore we must endeavour the Mortification of these, or in vain we hope for any well grounded Peace or comfortable assurance.

4. These are the main Obstructors of our growth and progress in Grace and Holiness; these are the Chief of those suckers and luxurious Branches we have been told of so frequently of late; as a prevailing ill Humour in our Bodies, so are these in our Souls; whatever else we do in Religion, all will prove but to little purpose, we must never think to be any body for Christians, while we suffer these to Lord it over us: The Devil knows this well enough, and so he will give us leave to do almost any thing else, while we will but keep far enough from these, but touch these; and we touch the Apple of his Eye, he cannot endure it, knowing that if we do it in good earnest, his Interest in us is then like to go down apace; as ever we desire to be thriving Christians, we must endeavour to get rid of these.

5. These Sins of ours slew our Lord Jesus Christ, and then surely if we let these go, if we let these live, we are not Jesus his Friends; this should be a very moving Consideration to us; the pardon of any one of our Sins could not have been obtained, but at the expence of that precious Blood of his; and if we may suppose that some of our Sins gave him our dearest Lord a deeper Wound, a Sore or Bruise, then others of them, they were these; and do they not deserve a Wound from us? Should we not endeavour to give them a deadly crush for this? Yea it was one special End of his  
Death

Death to destroy these : And shall he die for us, and ( as to us ) loose his labour when he hath done ?

6. We should be quicken'd to our Work here, especially at such a time as this is, for *England's* sake, and for the Ark of God amongst us ; Matters seem to be at a very tickle trembling Point ; what the Lord intends to do we know not , but really many things looks very threatning, and God's faithful Ministers, who are like to know most of his Mind, are often dropping such hints as would make a sensible Heart tremble : Now this is the best way that we can take to prevent *England's* Ruine, nay if God save us not by his Prerogative Royal it is the only way ; and it is unquestionably the duty of each of us to be fighting for our Country at home, and thus we may do it ; and *England* hath not a worse Enemy then Sin, nor better Friends at this pinch then such as do heartily and vigorously ply their work here ; and now shall *England's* Ruine ly at our doors ; Or shall deliverance come, and we do nothing to set it forward on its way ?

7. This work though it be hard and difficult, yet it is not impossible, nay if we do sincerely apply our selves to it in God's way and strength, the Victory is certain ; it is very true, our Enemies are many and mighty, but its also as true, that they are all such as have been baffled and conquered ; it must be confessed that we are poor weak things : But withal, it must be granted that our Captain is strong ; we may venture to set one Lord Jesus against them all ; this is a mighty encouragement to our work, but no argument for sloth, for he requires we should



should be active in it, though in a manner he doth the work to our hands; He hath overcome all the Enemies of our Souls, and hath purchased that Grace for us whereby we also shall be enabled to overcome; and how many Saints are there now triumphing in Heaven with *Palms* in their Hands, who were once as deeply engaged in the Conflict, and it may be under as discouraging Circumstances as we can be; we have the same Captain that they had, and what he hath done in and for them he is ready to do, yea and will certainly and shortly do for and in us if we belong to him, abide in him, and continue with him; so that difficulties should not be pleaded by us as discouragements in a Matter of this nature and necessity. For,

8. And *lastly*, There is no other way for us here, but we must either kill or die; Sin (as some of us lately heard) is such a tyrant, all whose Laws are written in the Blood of Souls: It is Sin that brought Death into this World, and that hath digged Hell in the next; nothing so deadly as Sin; and suppose but one Sin allowed and spared, that one would as infallibly undo us for ever as a thousand: And farther, suppose our Hearts be sincere and so prevailing for God and therefore safe in the main, yet if we neglect our Duty, here those Sins of ours will not only keep us short, both as to Grace and Peace here (as was hinted before), but (which is a necessary consequent) they will also cause us to fall short of those Degrees of glory, which otherwise we might hereafter have attained unto, the least degree of which should be of more account with us, then all our worldly Interests laid together, yea then all this whole

whole World, and will be so to us if we are indeed such as have laid up our Treasure in Heaven where we are truly our selves.

### QUESTION III.

*How is the Duty of giving and receiving reproof to be managed?*

**T**HAT it is the Duty not only of Ministers to reprove Sin in others, though to do it Ministerially is peculiar to them by Virtue of their Office and their Commission and Charge thereupon: But yet that it is also the Duty of private Christians is plain, Lev. 19. 17. *Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart; thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer Sin upon him.*

Now in answer to the *Question*, how this Duty is to be managed, I shall give my thoughts:

1. By laying down some things which I take to be necessary Qualifications, in the Person that would be a right successful Reprover.

2. Some needful Cautions.

3. Some general Rules and Directions.

The Qualifications are as follows:

1. Wisdom and Prudence; these are necessary, because the right management of this Duty is a work of no small difficulty; and for want of these some well meaning Persons marr the Work, and instead of doing good do harm this way; light and heat should go together, otherwise the Motion will be irregular; we need these to direct us in suiting our Reproofs.

1. To the Persons we Reprove: And that,

1. With respect to their different Estates: For, though we must be Faithful to all, yet we

may not use the like freedom of Expression with all, Job. 34. 18. *Is it fit to say to a King, thou art wicked? Or to Princes, ye are ungodly?* 1 Tim. 5. 1. *Rebuke not an Elder, but entreat him as a Father.*

2. With respect to their Disposition and Temper: For, some are naturally more stubborn and hard to work on, others more soft and tender, Jude, 22, 23. *And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire;* I know it, there are some of that temper, and especially where any of them are also under that distemper, which renders them more capable of impressions of this sort; take such ordinarily I say, and one shall wound them deeper with the softest Word, nay with a silent Reproof in a look, then some others with the most sharp and cutting Reproof.

2. We need these to direct us to suit our Reproof to the Nature of the Offence, according as it is either more open or secret, or as it is greater or smaller, either in its self, or in its circumstances, or in its probable consequents.

3. As to the Time: The Preacher saith, *To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under Heaven*, Ecl. 3. 1. *And so a time to keep silence, and a time to speak*, v. 7. *And a wise man's heart discerneth both time and judgment*, Chap. 8. 5. Very much lieth in the right timing of a Reproof; such a Word spoken in Season, how good is it? I know indeed in some Cases, the Matter may not admit of delay; and likewise that delays sometimes may endanger a neglect: But yet methinks where it may, we should take the fittest time, which in General I think is, 1. When we find our

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own Spirits in a temper in some measure fit to give the Reproof; if I find boistrous unruly Passions up, that is no fit time for me to Reprove another in. 2. When the Person to be reprov'd is fittest to receive it, and like to get most good by it; we may learn this from *Abigail's* prudent Carriage of the matter, *1 Sam.* 25. 36, 37. she would not Reprove *Nabal* till the Wine was gone out of him; so to reprove a Man in the heat of his Passion, it is like to do no good, but farther to enrage him.

2. Humility and Meekness, *2 Tim.* 2. 24, 25. I know this and some other Scriptures produced, were spoken directly to Ministers, yet in a Proportion they shew every one of us our Duty too; and what Sin is there that we Reprove in others, that in some respect, degree or other, we have not been guilty of our selves? However we need not look far into our Hearts to find the seed and root of it, and of all other Sins whatever; yea more, no thanks to the best of us, that we are not as bad as the vilest Wretch that breaths; and sure here is enough if duly considered, to humble and meeken our Spirits, when we have to do with others in the way of Reproof: And as this is fitting upon our own Account, so likewise needful upon the Account of the Party reprov'd, because ordinarily he will but too hardly be perswaded, but that we are Proud and take too much upon us, or that we bear him ill Will, and are for picking a quarrel with him; one may believe that Man hath more Grace than ordinary, that can take a Reproof well, which is given him in a stiff, proud, and lofty Manner.

3. Love, Pity and Compassion; that general Rule, 1 Cor. 16. 14. (*Let all your things be done with charity* (or love), reacheth this Case; indeed we must hate the Sin we reprove in another, and we may and ought to express our hatred of it: But we may not hate his Person, nay we must see we love him; yea, though he be a wicked Man, yet we must love him as a Man, and so capable of Grace, and much more if he be one already made partaker of it; and we must endeavour by loving Expressions to wind in our Reproof as advantageously as may be; and so also we must do it with much Pity and Compassion to his weakness and infirmity, considering our selves that we also are in the Body, and have in us the like body of Sin, and so are not yet out of the Tempters reach, or out of Danger by his Temptations.

4. Zeal and Courage; as God's Glory is struck at, and in some sense wounded and blemished by every Sin committed by our selves or others (though to speak strictly and properly God is impassible, quite out of the reach of Sin and Sinners, our wickedness may hurt a Man as we are, but not God, *Job. 35. 8.* but no thanks to Sin or Sinners for that; he should not be, might they but have their Will) therefore lukewarmness and indifferency of Spirit here is a cursed thing; a holy heat become us well here, for which we have the highest Pattern in the World, even him who in other things was the most meek and lowly in Heart; so when we are called to reprove those that are above us (though I think it is not so ordinarily our Duty to reprove Superiors as others, they should

should rather be dealt with by others, or by us in another way, yet where it is plainly our Duty ) we should not fear the Faces of any; so the Prophets of old, when they had God's Commission and Charge, they spared not crowned Heads any more then others; and New Testament instances might also be easily produced here.

5. Integrity and Faithfulness, and that both to God and Man; but I fear I enlarge too much, and alas, which is worse but too impertinently.

6. Self-denial and Contempt of the World; this is a necessary Qualification, because if we will be Faithful to God and Souls, it may so fall out, that we may be called to reprove such as to outward things we may have most dependance on, whose Favour of all others we are most loath to loose, which may be hazarded by a faithful Reproof; this the Flesh knows how to improve; but here carnal Sinful-self must be denied, the World contemned when it stands in the way of our Duty; and if we would but be Faithful to God, we should find him so to us: Forthwith an upright Man, he will shew himself upright.

2. The Cautions are these:

1. That we reprove not that as Sin, which indeed is not so; we must take heed of that; for it would be Sin in us, and so justly deserve a Reproof from them; this was in some degree that good Man's Fault, 1 Sam. 1. 14, 15. And so Peter's Fault, Matb. 16. 22. For which our Lord gave him as severe a Rebuke as most we meet with, v. 23.



2. That we reprove not other's for that Sin which we have not good ground to charge them with, and are not able some way to convince them of, though I think in this Case it may be a Duty to give some friendly Intimations of what we either suspect or hear, in a way as inoffensive as may be, and I dare say, this is far more Christian like, then hasty, rash-judging upon weak grounds, and its ten to one on such as are false; by which, how much some have suffered the Lord knows; which it is a dangerous thing I think, to give a downright Reproof upon meer surmise, or upon bare herelays, especially in this censorious detracting Age, when false Reports are so common in Men's mouth's, yea too often in the mouth's of those that are Wise and Good, though alas this is no part either of their wisdom or goodness.

3. We should beware we do not throw away our Reproofs upon such as are unworthy of them, such as would but abuse them, and us for them; I think this Caution is warranted by, and may be grounded upon such Scriptures as these, Math. 7. 6. *Give not that which is holy unto dogs, &c.* Prov. 9. 8. *Reprove not a scorner, least he hate thee*; though we must use this with Caution, and not falsely call and account others so, and then think our selves excused from our Duty.

3. The general Rules are as follow:

1. In the business of Reproof, we must not only have regard to the Matter and Manner of it, but we must likewise take notice what are our principle Motives and Ends, and see that they be right; in general it is the Glory of  
God



God, the Good of others with our selves that we should aim at, a desire of promoting which should set us on work, influence and guide us in the whole of it; should we reprove others from a proud, envious, unquiet or malicious Spirit, merely with an intent to provoke, disgrace them, or the like, this were to say the Commandment backward, which would be sad work; we must be very dilligent, watchful and careful to get rid of, or avoid as much as possibly we can, those things in our selves which we reprove in others; want of due Care here, we shall find exceedingly to damp our Spirits, and to be a very great obstruction to the discharge of our Duty; so it will also cause us and our Reproofs to be less regarded, if not despised by others, they will not have that authority in them, but they will be ready in Heart at least, if not in words to retort that upon us [Physician Practice will be found another thing hereafter, then many I fear now take it for; but yet also heal thy self.] Or that, *Matth.* 7. 3, 4, 5. We must not forget our selves so as to leave Prayer out, or rather so as to leave God out of the business for want of engaging him by Prayer; it is by Prayer that this word of Reproof must be sanctified: When ever we are called to this Duty, we had need lift up a Prayer to God, that he would put suitable Affections into our Hearts, right Words which are forcible into our mouths, and that he would send the Arrow home to the Mark, and direct it to the White, and that he would so influence and wind about the Heart of the Party reprov'd, that our Reproof may not fail of attaining our forementioned desired end.

4. If we would be profitable and successful Reprover's our selves, we must then learn in like manner to receive a Reproof from others; but this brings us to the Second Part of the Case or Question, namely.

2. How we are to manage a Reproof when it is given us by others?

#### QUESTION IV.

*What must the People of God do when he is testifying against them?*

**A**S the Carriage of God's People towards him, so his Dispensations towards them are very various; sometimes he smiles and lifts them up; sometimes he frowns and casts them down; a right and ready compliance with God in all his providential Dispensations towards us, is our plain and indispensable Duty, and that wherein much of the Excellency of a Christian lieth: Now in answer to this seasonable Question (which I take as chiefly aiming at the Publick, God's testifying against us in his Judgments there, though withal, it with the answers to it, may be also applied unto a private Case) take my poor Thoughts in the following Particulars:

1. We must see and take notice of God's Hand, when it is either lifted up in his threatenings, or laid on in his Judgments; the great God expects (as well he may) to be heedfully noticed and observed by all, but more especially by his own People, as in what he saith, so also in what he doth, as in his Mercies, so in his Judgments; by the contrary we greatly affront and provoke him, as thereby we put a great

great and unworthy Slight upon him: This the Lord takes very ill, and by it we are like to bring more and greater Judgments upon our selves, Isa. 26. 11. *Lord when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see, but they shall see; if we will not see his Hand, we are like to feel more of it till we cannot but see and take notice of it,* Psal. 28. 5. *Because they regard not the work of the Lord, nor the operation of his hands, he shall destroy them, and not build them up.* This is One Part of our Duty.

2. An holy awful fear and dread of our incensed God, and of his Judgments; the Name of the Lord is a *glorious and fearful Name*, Deut. 28. 58. and as his Attributes so his Works also are part of his Name, and therefore grounds for our fear, and particularly his Works of Judgment: And so we read that *Moses* was afraid when God's displeasure was hot against the Children of *Israel*, Deut. 9. 19. And so *2 Sam.* 6. 19. When *Uzziah* was smitten, it is said, that *David* was afraid of the Lord that day; and elsewhere its he that saith, Psal. 119 v. 120. *My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, I am afraid of thy judgments.* It is the duty of all Men to fear him, who doth but look upon the Earth and it trembleth; who can and shortly will with one angry Frown, make all the stout hearted Sinners in the World fear him and tremble before him; but especially he expects it from his own People who are better acquainted with him, and know better then others do what the Smiles and Frowns of a God mean, and that especially when he is meeting them in those ways of his, in which he is terrible unto the Children of Men.

3. We

3. We must justify God in his severest Dispensations towards us; *The Lord is righteous in all his Ways, and holy in all his Works*; there are great depths sometimes, but never any the least irregularities or excesses, in any of his Judgments; righteousness is the Habitation of his Throne, even when Clouds and Darkness are round about him; as it is the Duty, so it hath been the Practice of God's People, when his hand hath lain heaviest on them, yet to ascribe Righteousness to him, and it becomes us to look on them and do likewise, to say as, Ez. 9. 15. *O Lord God of Israel thou art righteous*, Neh. 9. 33. *Howbeit thou art just in all that is brought upon us, for thou hast done right*, Dan. 9. 14. *The Lord our God is righteous in all his works that he doth*: Or as the Prophet *Jeremiah* in the Name of the Church, Lam. 3. 22. *It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his Compassions fail not*.

4. We must dilligently search and try our Hearts and Ways; we are not now speaking of a matter that is forreign to us; alas, it is our own Case; the Lord hath certainly a Controversy with us, if ever he had one with any People on this side utter Ruine; and his Controversy hath seemed to be very much, if not mostly with his own People: Now methinks we should each of us be saying, Lord, is it I? Without doubt it is Sin that hath broached this quarrel between God and us, and there is none of us without that *Achan* in our Tents, our business is to search it out; this is one main Duty which both God's Word and his Rod points us too, Lam. 3. 40. *Let us search and try our ways*.

5. Our

5. Our next duty is a free and hearty Confession of, a judging our selves for, and deep humiliation under the sense of those sins we discover, whereby we have provoked him ; This the Lord stands upon, Lev. 26. 40. *If they shall Confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their Fathers, with the Trespass wherewith they have trespassed against me, and that also they have walked contrary unto me ;* Jer. 3. 13. *Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God ;* Hos. 5. 15. *I will go and return unto my place, until they acknowledge their Offence ;* This way we are to give Glory unto him, Josh. 7. 19. What large Confessions do we meet with in Scripture, made by the People of God, when his hand hath been upon them ? When the Lord is testifying against us, and laying load upon us in his Judgments, we should take his part, and this way be laying load upon our selves, tho' indeed in another sense, this is the next way to ease our selves of the burden ; *I confessed, and thou forgavest, saith David ;* so, 2 Chron. 7. 14. *If my People shall humble themselves ;* 1 Pet. 5. 6. *Humble yourselves, under the mighty hand of God ;* When the Lord is laying us low by his Judgments, our work is not to struggle with him, but to fall at his Foot, to lay our Hearts low for our sins.

6. Our Sins thus discovered and confessed must be forsaken, we must turn from them unto him that smites us ; Without this the former will neither please God nor any thing avail us ; we must take things as God hath laid them together, *If my People shall humble themselves and turn from their evil ways.*

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*Let us search and try our ways and turn unto the Lord*; This is the great Errand his Judgments come to us upon; These things I think do not need so much to be proved, as to be urged and pressed home upon our hearts; O that we could but effectually do that? It is sin that hath bread the difference between God and us, by them we have been fighting against him, by them we have provoked this long suffering God of ours unto his strange work, and now that his terrible anger is thus kindled, there is but one way for us to take, that is to submit, to lay down our Arms, unless we are resolved to try it out with him; Nay, but let the Pot-sheards strive with the Pot-sheards of the Earth, but woe to us if thus we strive with our Maker; who ever hardned himself against God and prospered? We must therefore cast away our Transgressions from us, and with indignation say to our sins as *Ephraim* to his Idols, *get ye hence.*

7. We must seek unto God by Earnest extraordinary Prayer joyned with fasting; It is his will that we should thus by Prayer enquire of him at all times, and for all things that we need, and that he hath promised; But especially this is our Duty in such times as these; *Call upon me in the Day of Trouble*; This the Lord expects, *Hos. 5. 15. In their Affliction they will seek me early*; And ordinary Prayer must not serve the turn; The Lord looks for early earnest Prayer; And so that we spend more time then ordinary in the Duty; Not that the Lord is wrought upon by the length of our Prayers, but the work that is to be done upon our own Hearts ordinarily requires it; And this joyned with fasting,  
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which God's plain and pressing Commands, and the practice of his People thereupon in all Ages doth sufficiently prove, particular instances of either of which I think are needless here.

8. We must renew our Covenant with God, and by solemn vows bind our Hearts to their good behaviour for the future ; we had need to take our Hearts at all the advantages we can, and at such times we have them at an advantage ; We too frequently and sadly experience it how easily our Corruptions break through our strongest Purposes and Resolutions, they are but like *Sampsons* green withs to him. But now solemn Vows, and frequent renewing of our Covenants, provided we be serious in it, these are observed to be good means to keep our treacherous Hearts from starting back ; Tho' here we must be careful we do not ensnare Conscience in matters of indifferency or impossibility ; This hath been and still is the practice of Gods People ; *Neb.* 38. And because of all this we make a sure Covenant and write it, and our Princes, Levites and Priests seal unto it ; which we have at large in the 10. Chapter.

And so we find *David* speaking of the Vows that he had made in his distress, *Psal.* 66. 13, 14.

9. We must be careful to pay our Vows by a resolved cleaving to the Lord, whatever comes upon us ; Vows and Covenants solemnly renewed lay us under further Obligations ; Tho' its true, the Lord hath the highest Authority to command, and we are bound to obedience anticedently to any such acts of our own, by Vertue of his most Supream and Absolute right in us, and Sovereignty over us, resulting therefrom ; yet it is as true, that we cannot after such solemn  
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Transactions by sin depart from God at so cheap a rate as before, no our guilt and his displeasure will thereby be the greater ; and herein if the wise man's judgment may pass, we act the part of egregious fools, Eccles. 5. 4, 5. *When thou hast vowed a Vow unto God, defer not to pay, for the Lord hath no pleasure in fools, pay that which thou hast vowed; better it is that thou shouldst not vow, then that thou should'st vow and not pay ; Yea, we must thus cleave unto God, all his Judgments notwithstanding ; They indeed yield us a good reason why we should leave sin, but none why we should leave him ; but on the contrary, why we should cleave more closely to him ; Come on us what will, it should be the care of our Souls, that we may be able to say with the Church, Psal. 44. 17. 18, 19. All this is come upon us yet have we not forgotten thee ; neither have we dealt falsely in thy Covenant ; our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way ; Tho' thou hast sore broken us in the place of Dragons , and covered us with the Shadow of Death.*

10. We must steadfastly hope and trust in him according to his word ; He is styled the hope of Israel in the time of trouble, Jer. 14. 8. *Thou art my hope in the day of evil,* Jer. 17. 17. We must hope and trust in him and in his Promises, even when his Providences seem in our shallow apprehensions to run never so cross to them ; we must hold to it as an inviolable truth, in spite of all that sense or Satan may object against it, that if the Mouth of the Lord hath spoken it, his hand shall make it good ; It is recorded of Abraham, *that against hope he believed in hope,* Rom. 4. 18. And we find David oft  
pro<sup>s</sup>

professing his Resolution to trust in the Lord, whatsoever distress he was in ; And so Job, Chap. 13. 15. *Tho' he kill me yet will I put my trust in him* ; This is part of that glory which we may not give unto another, when in distress we thus betake our selves to creature Refuges, our Hearts depart from the Lord and set up such creatures as Idols in his place, which thing the Lord hath cursed, *but blessed are all they that put their trust in him.*

11. We must wait patiently for the Lord and his Salvation ; He that believeth maketh not haste ; He was quite out in his argument, and shewed a wicked Spirit who said, 2 King. 6. 33. *Behold this evil is of the Lord, what should I wait on the Lord any longer* ; God's People should be and are of another mind : Tho' alas sometimes their Hearts are ready to grow sick, and their eyes ready to fail them when their hopes are long defer'd, but that is there infirmity ; But ordinarily they are of another mind, Isa. 8. 17. *I will wait on the Lord that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and will look for him*, Mic. 7. 7. *I will wait for the God of my Salvation*, Lam. 3. 26. *It is good that a Man both hope and quietly wait for the Salvation of the Lord* ; Once more,

12. And lastly, after all we must endeavour quietly to submit, and chearfully to resign up our selves to the Lords good pleasure ; when he is testifying against us, we must with Aaron hold our peace, or say with Eli, *it is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good* ; A rare Example we have for this in the Man after Gods own Heart, in his sweet Frame and Carriage in that, which I think considering all the Circumstances of it, was the sorest outward distress that ever

ever he was in , when he fled from Absolon his Son, 2 Sam. 15. 25, 26. *And the King said unto Zadock, carry back the Ark of God into the City: If I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and shew me both it and his habitation.* But if he thus say, I have no delight in him, behold here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him; yea , which is yet higher still , here we have the example of David's Lord; when his holy and innocent nature began to give back with honour and amazement at the apprehension of those matchless Sorrows and Sufferings which were before him, he thus pray'd ; *O my Father, if it be possible let this Cup pass from me ;* but immediately he adds, *nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt ,* Matth. 26. 39. Wherein he hath left us the highest instance and example of Submission and Resignation to the Divine Will that ever was, and in such things wherein he is ( in our poor Measure ) imitable by us, it is unquestionably our duty to tread in his Steps,

### QUESTION V.

*How must we carry our selves towards our afflicted Brethren ?*

**M**Y time allows me to say but little to this *Question.* But,

I. We must take heed we no way add to their Affliction ; see we fall not under that heavy charge the *Psalmist* brings against his enemies , *Psal. 69. 26.* which is ushered in and followed with very dreadful Prophetical Imprecations ; Afflicting work is God's work, and he cannot but be highly displeased when we  
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are for taking this his Work out of his Hands. And here,

1. We must take heed we do it not by our Words.

2. That we do it not by our Carriage.

1. We must take heed that we do it not by our Words; we must take heed we do not rashly and uncharitably Censure them, take heed of such Expressions, yea and of such Thoughts too; our bad Hearts have by Nature a wretched faculty this way; when Persons fall under Affliction, especially if their Affliction be somewhat singular, either for kind or degree, we are ready presently to conclude it must be for some extraordinary Guilt, whereas the Lord for wise and holy Ends best known to himself, many times culls out his dearest and choicest Servants as to the honest Work, so to the forest Tryal, the greatest Sufferings; as a wise Commander or General will deal with his Souldiers; but this is the common Opinion; If an holy upright *Job* who was a non-such in his Time, if he fall under an unusual Calamity, wise and good Men will not down with it but he must needs be an Hypocrite; if a venomous Creature fasten upon a *Paul's* Finger, the Barbarians will have it he is a Murderer, or some such like Offender, whom Vengeance suffers not to live; this is very sinful, very dangerous and provoking; we have something for the Proof of this, *Job*, 42. 7, 8. *And the Lord said unto Eliphaz, my wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two Friends, for ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right as my servant Job hath, &c.* *Job's* three Friends seem to have been pious, good Men, yet alas,

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going upon some false Notions and Opinions they had got, rigid Censurers of poor *Job* in his sore Distress, and for this Sin of theirs had not he prayed for them and the Lord accepted him, some sore Judgment had been like to fall on them, as we may gather from the 8th *verse*. We must take heed of this.

2. We must take heed we do it not by our Carriage; we must take heed of a lofty proud and scornful Carriage towards them; it is highly sinful and dangerous thus to trample upon those that are under God's feet already; yea, we must take heed of a strange Carriage towards them, of any thing that looks like unkindness or disrespect; this is one thing which is wont to add much to the grief of the afflicted, it cuts them to the Heart; when they see their Brethren standing at a distance from them in their Distress; we find God's People oft times complaining very heavily of this in Scripture, and such Complaints lifted up to God are not like to fall down again very light on those that justly fall under them; and if their Affliction come by the Oppression of Men, we must especially take heed we no way join or take part with their Oppressours; we must take heed we no way add to their Affliction.

2. We must do what we can, and in our places lawfully may, to ease them under, and to help them out of their Affliction. Here,

1. We must heartily Pity and Compassionate them.

2. We must do what we can to help them.

1. We must heartily Pity and Compassionate them, really Sympathize with them; to him that is afflicted pity should be shown of his Friend;



Friend ; as we have it ( to that purpose at least ) some where in the Book of *Job*. Principles of humanity call for this ; yea, one may see something of this in and among Creatures of a lower Rank ; but mere natural Pity is but the lesser part of that I here mean ; our pity must be a gracious Pity, we must Sympathize with them as Brethren, we must do it for Jesus sake, if we would have him hereafter say, *inasmuch as ye did it to one of the least of these my brethren* (for so the King in all his Glory, out of his great Love and Condescension doth and will own them too, how poor, low and afflicted soever they may be at present) *ye have done it unto me ;* thus we must pity them.

2. We must do what we can to help them.  
And,

1. We must endeavour to do it our selves.

2. We must endeavour to engage others to do that which we cannot.

1. We must endeavour to do it our selves.  
And so,

1. We must endeavour to inform our selves about the Nature of their Affliction, as it is either outward or inward, together with the Grounds and Causes of it, observing as near as we can where the Burthen pincheth sorest, and where their great weakness lieth, that so we may apply our selves to them most suitably, and so as may be with greatest probability of Success.

2. As we are able, and have opportunity, we should be ready to advise, counsel and direct them how they ought to Bear, how they may improve their Afflictions, and also how they

may get holily and comfortably out of them in God's way and time, which is ever best.

3. We must endeavour to support, cheer and comfort them, by pointing them to Scripture promises, those strong Pillars, and full Breasts of Consolation, especially to such of them as come nearest to their Case; first endeavouring to clear their Right and Interest in them, if that be a Matter in Question (as alas it is with the most), and then directing and assisting them in drawing those Breasts which are ever full, though continually emptying themselves; and we must also do this by imparting Experiences to them in a free but humble Manner, experiences of our own, and also those of others that we have met with, thus endeavouring to comfort them with the Comforts where-with we and others have in the like Case been comforted of the Lord.

4. If their Case be outwardly necessitous, we must actually Relieve them as we have Ability and Opportunity; not only draw out our Bowels to their Pity, but also our Purses to their Relief; not only give them good Words, but also such things as they need; thus we must endeavour to help them our selves.

2. We must endeavour to engage others to do that which we cannot.

1. Men.

2. God.

1. Men, our fellow Creatures and Brethren especially, such as either upon temporal or spiritual Accounts, have larger Abilities and fairer Opportunities to do it then our selves; I can do little more then name things, and that in haste, but I doubt not these with other things will

will be more fully and pertinently insisted on by others, then alas I ( had I more time ) should be able to do.

2. We must especially endeavour by fervent and believing Prayer, to engage the great God their Father and our Father to their help ; He that is the Comforter of those that are cast down ; in a special manner the *Orphan's* God, such as are destitute, afflicted and helpless ; he that can most easily , speedily and effectually reach both Persons and Cases which are quite out of our reach, or the reach of any one besides himself.

## QUESTION VI.

*How may a Christian come to bear the greatest worldly Losses graciously ?*

**B**Y a Christian here we mean one that is so indeed ; such a one is not so secured by the Promise, or so hedged in by the Providence of God, but that outward Losses as well as other Afflictions may sometimes break in upon him here, yea such as are very Great, any but such as would quite undo him as a Christian ; From these indeed he is as secure and safe as Eternal Truth can make him, and shall be so while that endures ; but yet he may loose his Staff, though he cannot loose his God.

I think it may not be amiss here to hint farther in a word or two , what we mean by his bearing these Losses graciously.

And in general I think it is, to bear them by the special help of God's holy Spirit , according to the Rule of his Word , aiming therein chiefly and ultimately at his Glory.

1. By the special help of God's holy Spirit ; For, mere Nature when most highly refin'd and elevated, will not pass with God for Grace, though sometimes with Men it may ; and all Grace flows from the Spirit, the immediate inspirer, actor and perfecter of it in the Soul.

2. According to the Rule of his Word ; God's willing this or that shews sufficiently that it is Good or Gracious, yea, it makes it to be so ; and in his Word it is that he hath most fully and plainly told us what his Mind and Will is ; and in reference to the Case before us, the Scripture abounds with that which may direct us in the streight Line of our Duty, warning us we turn not aside to the right Hand or to the left : But I may not add more here.

3. Aiming herein chiefly and ultimately at his Glory ; For, though we may also look at our own Benefit and Advantage, yet not solely, seperately, or supremely, but as in Conjunction with and Subordination to the Glory of that God, of, through, and to whom are all things : But to do this ( I should rather have said something like it ), merely to get a Name by seeming to be that which in Truth we are not, this is very mean and low, base hypocrisy, and that big with several other grievous Sins.

I thought these hints not altogether impertinent to the Case, though alas, its like the account I have laid down is very lame and imperfect.

Now in *Answer* to the *Question*, I shall lay down my thoughts under these three general Heads.

1. We must endeavour to rid, and then keep our Hearts as clear as we can of those things which would hinder us.

2. We must seriously ply our Hearts with suitable moving Considerations.

3. We must diligently apply them to other seasonable Christian duties.

1. We must endeavour to rid and then keep our Hearts as clear as we can of those things which would hinder us, as they breed and nourish a contrary frame in us.

To name some of the chief of them.

1. Pride; an over high opinion of our selves, a fond conceit of some Worth or Defect in our selves; this is that which makes us so hard to be pleased when our condition is at best, and that which breeds and feeds in patience and discontent, when by Losses or other Afflictions our condition seems to be changing or changed for the worse; so we must endeavour to get and keep Pride low.

2. Unbelief; when we cannot trust God, take his word, lean upon a promise any farther then we have sensible props to support us; it is a very sad and dreadful Truth, that tho' we will trust any Man, even such a one as we know to be an unrighteous dishonest Man so far as we can see him, yet, we have much ado through unbelief to perswade our wretched Hearts to trust the most holy, righteous God, the God of Truth any farther; we must strive with might and main against this evil Heart of unbelief.

3. Worldliness; when we have too high an opinion of worldly things, when we fancy them to be that which they are not, to have that in



them which in truth they have not; and so when our affections go out inordinately towards them, it is because our affections towards worldly things are so strong, this is one great reason why the Want or Loss of them is so strong and heavy an Affliction to us, and why we are so weak and unable to bear it; was the World (instead of being in our hearts) placed under our foot as it should be, our work would not be so difficult; we must labour hard that it may be so.

4. Mistakes about the nature and end of such Providences; we are very apt to misconstrue such Providences, ready to think the Lord is about to undo us, when he is but taking another, yea, and that to the wisest and best way to enrich us; ready to think he is about to kill us, when he is only letting us blood to save our life; the afflictions and consolations of the Saints (as one saith) differ only in their Countenances; and as we heard not long since, there is a vast difference between such Providences as they are dispensed to the wicked and to the godly; as to the former, the Rod is turned into a Serpent, but as to the latter, the Serpent is turned into a Rod: The Lord is still curiously working about his own eternal purpose in the Salvation of our Souls, but we misunderstand him, and that is one great hinderance of our bearing such dispensations as we ought.

5. An over hastiness of Spirit in passing a judgment concerning such Providences; this is one cause of our former misunderstanding of them; they are many times very dark and misterious, and our first Apprehensions about them are many times false and mistaken ones;



If we have observed God and our selves, we may remember that many Providences of which we have had but dismal thoughts at first view, our thoughts have been mightily changed about them, when we have seen the beginning and end together, and so have read such Providences backward ; but alas we are ordinarily too quick with the Lord , will not give him time, have not patience till he hath brought the whole wheel about ; and this is another thing that makes our work here so hard as it is, which therefore must be corrected and amended.

6. The Temptations of Satan ; its like he will be ready to take this opportunity of belying God to us , and after this or some such manner to suggest ; is this the God that loves thee ? Is he now fulfilling his Promises and answering thy Prayers ? See what a kind Master thou servest , and what thou gettest by his Service : Thus its like he will be prompting us to distrust, impatience, discontent and the like ; we must see we be not ignorant of his Devices, and as soon as we discover the Temptation, with abhorrence we must reject it.

This to the first General.

2. We must seriously ply our hearts with suitable moving Considerations. And so,

1. We should consider that whatever we have lost , and by what means and instruments so ever we lost it , it is the Lord that hath taken it ; there is certainly such a thing as Divine Providence, permitting, ordering and bringing about whatever doth befall us here ; when Losses and other Afflictions befall us , the Lord takes it upon himself as his own doing, and God's People have been wont to see and acknowledge

knowledge his hand, and this is that which hath stilled and calmed them, as we see in the recorded instance of *Job*, *David* and others.

2. We should consider, that whatever the Lord hath thus taken, he hath taken nothing but his own; *The Earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof*; we have nothing for enjoyment but what he gave us, and we are not properly Lord's of what we have but Steward's; God's right in his Creatures is such, as cannot be alienated; we eat his Bread, wear his Wool and his Flax, carry his Silver in our purses and the like; and now, why may not the Lord do what he will with his own?

3. We should consider, the Lord hath taken nothing from us, but what we were unworthy of when he gave it, and have since forfeited by our Sins, and but a part of that neither; the Lord is free when he gives, and just when he takes; we deserve not the least morsel of food, or a rag to cover our nakedness with; and by our Sins we have forfeited all he hath thus freely given us a thousand times over, yea, and our very beings too; and therefore we have great reason to be patient, yea, and thankful also under all our losses here.

4. We should consider the things of this World, they are other things then the most of Men, yea, and then we our selves ordinarily take them to be; we think they look bravely at a distance, beholding them with a vitiated eye, and through a false deceitful medium; but if indeed we will come near and know the truth of the matter, we have it from him who never mis-called either person or thing, that *they are but vanity and vexation of Spirit*, things that cannot

cannot profit, yea, things that are not: And is it not a vain thing for one extreemly to disquiet himself either about the gain or loss of a little Vanity? Children and Fool's indeed will take on mightily for the loss of a Toy, but Men of understanding know better.

5. Take these things at best, and yet there is danger of our having too much, as well as of our having too little of them, yea, I am apt to think more danger of the two; more danger of our surfeiting through abundance, then of our pineing through want; and now the Lord knows better then we do what is enough, too little or too much for us, and we have great reason to confide in his Wisdom, Love and Care herein, and by our Carriage should let him and others to see that we do so.

6. Be these things as good as they will, and do what we can, we cannot long enjoy them; Death at farthest will certainly part us and all our worldly Enjoyments at once, and that is upon its way, and coming as fast as ever time that flying post can bring it, and hath certainly taken some steps towards us even since we nam'd it: Now this consideration that the Time is short, should mightily moderate our affections towards these things both in the enjoyment, want or loss of them.

7. We should consider others of God's People have met with, as great, yea far greater Losses then our's are, and have born them graciously; *Job* what a loss had he, who of the richest Man in all the *East*, in one day became poor to a Proverb? *David* driven from a Kingdom, and forced to fly for his Life; yet, we see how sweetly they took it: These and such like

like examples should both encourage and quicken our endeavours here.

8. We should consider how good it is that we thus bear them ; hereby we shall please and honour God ; hereby we shall credit Religion, letting the World see that whatever they fancy, yet we find something in it that is real, something that yields us real Support : Hereby we shall lay in for our own, both present and future sweet Peace and Satisfaction.

9. We should consider the Evil of the Contrary ; as thereby we shall dishonour God, gratify the Devil, discredit Religion, harden the World in their Mistakes about it, break our present Peace, and lay in for our future Sorrow, which is the best that can come of it.

10. We should consider if we are the Persons concerned in this Case, Christians indeed, then whatever we have lost, yet, our all is safe ; the Lord is his Peoples portion, their All ; and so all that he is, all that he hath, its all theirs as they need it, and as it would be for their Good ; thus it is, and thus it shall be in spite of Sin, Earth and Hell, *for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it, [ I will be their God ]* and the Zeal of the Lord God of Host's shall perform this, shall make it good : O methinks there is life and soul in this consideration, if we know but how to draw it out !

Other things might be added, but I fear least before this, I should be thought tedious.

3. We must diligently apply our selves to other seasonable Christian Duties.

So 1. We must give diligence to clear up our special Covenant Interest in God ; I cannot

not reasonably think to perswade my Heart to bear such Losses as it should, unless I can shew it something that I have, or at least may have, which is as good or better than that which I have lost; and to bare worldly Losses quietly because I have much more of these things left, this is not right; and the bare having an Interest in God, will not be sufficient for my Support, unless it be in some measure known to me; but if I know that this God whose Name is, I am, if I can make it out that he is my own God; I need not fear then at next word to say, all's my own, and then my Work here would be easy.

2. We must exercise our selves much in lively believing Meditations on him, and our unspeakable Happiness in him; there is certainly that in God which doth amply suit our case, and which would effectually do our work, but we must not expect this in the way of a Charm, or that God should work Miracles for us; though I have the best Food upon my Table, yet, it will not nourish or strengthen me unless I open my Mouth, take, chew and digest it; so it is here.

3. We must endeavour all we can to maintain constant Communion with God; while a Soul enjoys real Communion with God, its well with that Soul, and much at one to it, whether it enjoys more or less of the Creature; a gracious Soul tastes that sweetness in near and intimate Communion with God, that while this is enjoy'd, it takes little or no notice of what of the World it either hath or wants; O it finds Meat and Drink, House and Lands, Friends, Earth, yea and Heaven too in Communion



munion with God! Hereupon there are such ineffably sweet Communications of God to the Soul, and such mutual endearing Embraces, as immediately fit the Soul in each corner of it, with unspeakable Satisfaction and Joy; but I must add, there is yet something in it, which is an unutterable Secret; such as experimentally know what it is for the Lord to deal familiarly with them this way, such will understand what I mean; and would not this do our business now? What think you?

4. We must endeavour to keep up every Grace in good Heart, but especially see we nourish and cherish the Grace of Faith; and keep that close to its work; every Grace hath its proper work and office in the Soul, but among all the rest Faith is the great doer, and not the least among the bearers of Burthens; and in reference to this present Case, it will be well or ill with us, as our Faith is either lively or languishing.

5. We must be much in the search and study of the holy Scriptures; the Word of God abounds with precepts, promises, examples, very Applicable to our present Case; some little hath been hinted; I had thoughts here to have added more, but must forbear, being sensible I have over done. Once more,

6. And *lastly*, We must give our selves unto Prayer; when we have done our best, Satan will be solliciting Evil, and dis tempered Frames will be creeping on us; when its thus, we must run to God by earnest and believing Prayer, there's no way like it; if ever we bear our Losses graciously, it must be by the special help of the Spirit, as hath been hinted, and  
though



though the Lord sometimes in the way of Pre-rogative, or of his soveraign Grace, is found of those that seek him not, yet, the promise is made unto those that ask.

## QUESTION VII.

*How may a Christian improve outward Prosperity to God's Glory, and to his own and others Good?*

**T**O know how to abound is as high and rare an attainment of Grace, as to know how to want; but though few in comparison do, yet some have, and therefore we in our advantageous Circumstances may attain to it in the strength of the same Christ, *Phil. 4. 12, 13.*

Now in answer to this *Question*, the scope and drift of which is (as I take it) to instruct us in this Lesson.

1. We must labour to discover, and then carefully to avoid those Sins and Temptations which this Estate doth especially expose us to.

2. We must labour to get acquainted with, and then dilligently and conscienciously to discharge those Duties, and exercise those Graces which this Estate doth especially call us to, and gives us an advantage for.

3. As we would do thus, we must carefully observe and follow some Rules and Directions.

1. We must labour to discover, and then carefully to avoid those Sins and Temptations which this Estate doth especially expose us to. And,

1. Those which do respect others. And so,  
1. Those which more directly respect God himself; such as these, unmindfulness, forgetfulness of God, an alienation of our Hearts and

and Affections from him; a careless neglect of the Duties of his Worship, or a formal customary dead and heartless Performance of them; O that in these things and the like, we did not speak from so much sad experience as we do! *Again*, Disobedience and Rebellion; if *Jesheron* be waxed fat, the next news we hear of him is that he kicked; we must beware of these things and the like.

2. Those which do more directly respect our Brethren; and do we never in Prosperity meet with a Temptation, and find a Proneness in our Hearts, when we are as it were on the Top of the Hill to overlook, despise, condemn our poor Brethren that are below us in the Valley? *Job* saith [ *He that is ready to slip with his feet, is as a lamp despised of him that is at ease* ] if so, we must take heed of that: *Again*, Beware of unmercifulness towards them; have we a care they do not want our Bowels; but especially that we do not hurt their's; take we heed that when we are at ease our selves, we be not among them who are not greived for the Affliction of others, but especially that we add not to their Affliction; O beware we of any thing that looks like injury or oppression; and as we must thus labour to discover and carefully to avoid those Sins and Temptations which respect to others. So,

2. Those which do more directly respect our selves; and so take heed of Pride; this was the Devils Sin, and his Ruine, and he would have us like him in both; and do we not find our Spirits ready to be puffed up on this occasion; I dare say, they are no ordinary Christians with whom its otherwise: *Again*,  
Take

Take we heed of Security ; when our Mountain seems to stand strong, its well if our Hearts say not next, it shall never be moved ; take heed of that : *Again*, Take we heed of Prodigality, an unlawful excessive wastful Spending, or spending Wastfulness of the Creature ; I remember a choise Servant of God, one that hath laboured much amongst us, once when I was with him in a fit of Sicknes taking a Medicine, he called for the Spoon back to lick it, saying, Jesus Christ would have nothing lost ; in which ( as I concluded ), he had reference to his ordering the Fragments to be gathered up after that large and plentiful Feast upon a few Barly-loaves and two or three small Fishes : *Again*, Take we heed of Sensuality ; our Lusts will expect our Prosperity should be a Feast for them ; they will crave it, and the Devil will sollicite for them, but these Beggars must be denied ; we must take heed of sensuality and of worldliness, take heed of sinful inordinate pantings after, love to, use of, or delights in the Creature ; This as to the first General.

2. We must labour to get acquainted with, and then conscientiously and diligently to discharge those Duties, and exercise those Graces which this Estate gives us a special call to, and advantage for. And,

1. Those which more directly respect others. And so,

1. Those which more immediately respect God himself ; and so we must own and acknowledge God as the free and gracious author, founder, and maintainer of our Prosperity ; and then it naturally follows hence, that we be thankful to him for it ; and here a true

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Christian

Christian hath far the Advantage of another Man, and is thereby laid under a stronger Obligation to this Duty, for he may see his outward Prosperity, his outward Mercies coming from that self same loving Hand and Heart that gave him his dear Christ; O how thankful should a Christian be! In a mercy that in it self may be but small, yet may he see and tast that which is of more worth then a World; this is no phanatical Dream, but a proved and experienced Truth: *Again*, Doth it not also follow that we should love him more dearly; Love would and should be paid in its own Coin; and by the way observe it, if we can but find this, that we love God more for our outward Prosperity, this would be an infallible sign that it comes from his Love, for as one saith, this is a certain Rule, that which causeth love, cometh from love; and then see that we grieve more ingenuously for our Sins against him; and the consideration of the cursed Ingratitude and Disingenuity that there is in our Sin's, sure this will when the Spirit strikes it home, open a Vein to purpose in a gracious Heart: *Again*, Let us see we learn to trust in him more stedfastly; we have promises and experiences too; see we trust him in our Prosperity; see we trust in him, and not in uncertain riches, friends or the like; and if he bring us into straits again, let us now learn to trust him then; trust him for these things if they be good for us, however that he will give us that in himself which is infinitely better; and so lets learn to trust him for better things; if from his Love he give us Earth, will he not much more give us Heaven, and all that we need

need in the way ? And then lets see we make him the chief object of our delight and joy : *Again*, Let's see we be more abundant vigorous and chearful in his Service , in all acts of Obedience.

2. Those which more directly respect our Brethren ; and so we must see we be humble, courtious and affable in our Carriage towards them ; and that we do heartily pity and compassionate them in their Necessities and Troubles, and that we do actually relieve and help them, as we have abillity and opportunity , remembering that the Lord hath more backs to cloath , more bellies to fill, more hearts to chear with our Prosperity then our own ; and as we must thus labour to get acquainted with , and then conscientiously and diligently to discharge those Duties, and exercise those Graces which a prosperous Estate calls to , and gives us advantage for, with respect to others. So,

2. Those which do more immediately respect our selves ; such as self-denial, moderation, holy contentation, a grave and sober joy and rejoycing, weanedness from the World, heavenly mindedness and the like : But I fear I have enlarged too much , and would fain leave a little room for the last thing , and so as that I may not streighten others neither. So,

3. As we would thus improve our outward Prosperity as hath been confusedly hinted, we must carefully observe and follow some rules and directions. To name five or six.

1. We must labour to get throughly convinced of our own Impotency, and utter insufficiency to do this of our selves ; and truly we know e'ne nothing of our selves , if we know



not this, that of our selves without Christ we can do nothing ; alas, we can't bare a Croſs, no more can we handle a ſingle Comfort as we ought ; then what ſhall we do in a State of full Proſperity, eſpecially if of any long continuance ? How certainly it ſinks us into ſecurity, ſenſuallity, worldlineſs, into a neglect of God, our Souls Eternity, and the like if left to our ſelves ?

2. We muſt ſee to it that we be Chriſtians indeed, that we have a thorough work of Grace wrought in our Hearts ; there are many Natural carnal Men that know what it is to be in Proſperity, what it is to Abound, but not one of them knows how to Abound, nor can they know any thing of it while they ſo continue ; in the right improving of Proſperity, there are many ſpiritual Acts and Motions required ( as you have heard ), but this cannot be without a ſpiritual Principle firſt inſuſed into the Soul ; without a gracious Habit, no gracious Act ; without ſpiritual Life, no ſpiritual Motion ; as we were lately inſtructed.

3. Having Grace we muſt ſee we keep it awake, ſtirring, and in a growing poſture ; a Man that hath Life, yet if he fall aſleep, and much more if he fall into a Lethargy or into a Sound outward Motion ceaſeth, even while his Life remains ; now and then he breaths almoſt inſenſibly, and that's all ; ſo it will be with us here ; we had need if we would have any work done, keep Grace waking, ſtirring, yea and growing too ; O a little Grace will be e'ne loſt in a great heap of worldly ſtuff ! Believe me, that Chriſtian who hath a great ſhare of outward Proſperity, needs more Grace than his Neighbours ; and alas for us whoſe ſtock is  
ſo



so low, can we not bless God from our Souls, that our outward Prosperity riseth not so high as some others doth? I am fully perswaded some of us can, as I am sure there is reason we should.

4. We must labour to maintain and keep up a constant watchfulness; this is absolutely necessary both with respect to our Dangers and our Duties, so we must watch our Hearts, watch our Corruptions, watch our Thoughts, Affections, and our outward Senses; and so we must watch Satan and his Temptations; and so we must watch unto Duty; watch for Calls to seasons of, and advantages for it, that so we may take wind and tide when they offer; And so we must watch our Hearts in duty to see that Grace be in its lively and kindly exercise.

5. We must see we be not strangers to our Bibles; whatever our Condition be prosperous or adverse, the Word of God, that's our Polestar to direct us how to steer our course; this must be a lamp unto our feet, a light unto our paths, for it is not in Man that walketh to direct his steps; as some of us heard not long since; we must therefore study our Bibles, highly prize and diligently attend upon a Gospel Ministry, and improve that with other helps we have to get a thorough understanding of, and acquaintance with them.

6. And *lastly*, We must see the Lord find us much and often upon our Knees, and that in Prayer we be much in the actings and exercise of Faith; in this Estate, especially if we enjoy it for any time without some considerable Interruptions, we must expect many Dangers and

Difficulties; and upon this ground a kneeling (I mean a praying posture) is far more safe and advantageous then to stand upon our own Legs; and so we must be much in the lively exercise of Faith on Christ, and the promises for wisdom and strength to enable us to discover, avoid or crush those Temptations, and to mortify those Corruptions, which in this Estate we are most exposed to and endangered by, as also to discharge those duties and exercise those Graces, which it gives us special calls to opportunities and advantages. For,

All this is soon said, but to do it will cost us some pains; but I think it is not more then needs, and moreover this we can say, Religion is so sweet a thing, that it will more then pay its own cost and charges even here; O then what will a [*well done good and faithful Servant*] hereafter be? And this with such an *& cetera* as eternal Possession can only fully unfold, sure this will be a reward for all our pains (a reward I say, but of free Grace) heaped up and running over.

### QUESTION VIII.

*What is the Duty which Persons joined together in a Christian Society, owe one unto another?*

**I** Will not take upon me to say much to this Case or Question. But,

1. Mutual brotherly Love is one thing wherein our Duty lieth; indeed though I mention this as a particular, it is the Sum of all; if we would say all in one Word, it must be this of Love, for Love is the fulfilling of the Law.

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There is a Love we owe to all Men as Men, even to our very Enemies: *Again*, There is a more special Love we owe to all the godly in general as such, and more especially to such as excel in godliness; and farther, I think there are some peculiarities in that we owe to such of them, as we are joined to by more near Cohibition, and in more fixed and constant Church Communion.

That Love amongst us is a Duty, it is a thing so obvious in it self as we are Brethren and Members one of another, and as it is the subject Matter of so great a Part of our Bibles, that I think I need not give particular Instances for Proof in so plain a case.

This Love must branch it self out into several streams, and discover it self several ways; to instance in a particular or two here. And

1. We must expresse and exercise our Love one to another, in a real hearty Simpathy one with another; weeping with them that weep, and rejoycing with them that rejoyce; as in the natural Body, if one Member suffer (be it but a Finger or a Toe) all the rest suffer with it, and so on the contrary if one Member be honoured the other Members rejoyce with it; so here we should be afflicted in the Afflictions of our Brethren, and rejoyce in their Welfare and Prosperity as our own; in this Sense, Afflictions and Mercies should as it were lie in common amongst us.

2. We must do it by denying our selves in many cases for their good, yea in some cases so far as to expose and actually lay down our Lives for them; as to preserve the Life of an eminently useful Minister or Christian, in some

cases we should be ready to Sacrifice our own; this is that which some have done, and found great Satisfaction in; if a blow threaten my Head or Breast, which I know not how to avoid, my Hand is presently up to receive it.

2. Another thing wherein our Duty lies (which is indeed but another way of expressing our Love, and that is), mutual Christian watchfulness; that I mean by it is, a concerned eying, observing, taking notice of one anothers Estates, Conditions, Frames and Carriages; I do not mean a prying into these things to satisfy Curiosity, or to furnish us with Matter for our vain, idle, unprofitable and sinful Chat, much less to satisfy, feed and nourish a proud and censorious Humour; no, but an endeared brotherly Love must here set us on work, and manage the matter as a thing necessary, in order to our mutual helpfulness one to another. And so,

3. Another thing wherein our Duty lies is, mutual helpfulness. And here,

1. We must beware we be at no time found acting the Part of Enemies or false Brethren, as to the outward Man and outward Concerns one of another, but especially we must beware of doing it as to one anothers Souls, which were to take Satan's part and become his Tools, a thing we were not long since awfully warned against; O let us take heed of doing any thing at any time to cool, chill and damp one anothers Graces and holy Affections, or of imitating and provoking one anothers Corruptions; and we must take heed of doing any thing that may justly grieve and sadden, or lay a stumbling-

ling-block before one another ; and then on the other hand, it concerns us to take heed that we do not through ignorance , infirmity, mistakes, but above all that we do not through prejudice take offence where it is not justly given.

2. We must see we be positively helpful one to another ; as in the natural Body the several Members are mutually helpful and serviceable one to another, so it should be amongst us ; we must see we be so according to our abilities, opportunities and others necessities ; look what Talents any of us have of estate, parts, gifts, graces, experiences, or whatever else is improvable for others good, we should endeavour to make it as a Common-stock so far as with prudence , without pride , self-ostentation, or stretching the line of our places we lawfully may. And,

1. We must endeavour to be mutually helpful one to another, with respect to the outward Man, the outward Conditions and Concerns one of another ; we must be ready to advise, counsel, direct, assist one another with respect to these ; Oh , base selfishness amongst us is an unnatural thing, for lo we be Brethren and Members one of another ; and then we must also relieve such of them as are in Poverty and Want according to our Abilities and Opportunities ; yea, we must give more freely more largely to such then to others.

2. We must especially endeavour to be mutually helpful to one anothers Souls ; I will humbly adventure to lay down a few things here ; I will do little more then name them. And,

1. Such



1. Such as have a stock of knowledge and spiritual understanding, the word of Christ dwelling richly in them, should be ready to disperse it among those that want, should be ready to instruct such as are more ignorant and raw, *Col. 3. 16.*

2. It is our duty to be often jogging, exciting, provoking one another to our Duty, when we are any of us growing dull, sleepy, careless and lukewarm, *Heb. 10. 24.*

3. When any of us are stepping aside, or are overtaken with a fault, it is our duty to admonish, reprove, restore such a one in the Spirit of Love and Meekness, *Lev. 19. 17. Gall. 6. 1.* such a poor distorted Member must be skillfully and tenderly set in joint again.

4. When any of our Brethren are sad, dejected, disconsolate, of a wounded and sorrowful Spirit, we should endeavour to comfort and strengthen such feeble minded ones in all their Troubles, with the Comforts wherewith we have been comforted of the Lord, *2 Cor. 1. 4: 2 Thess. 4. 18. Chap. 5. 14.*

5. It is our duty to be mutually helpful one to another in the way of Prayer, *Jam. 5. 16.* And let the case be what it will, Prayer will reach it, because it is the way to engage him that can; and here none of us can reasonably frame an excuse who have found the way to Heaven for our selves.

Give me leave to say two Words more :

1. All this and more as to Particulars ( as I doubt not you will hear ) is our Duty, but yet the Lord will take in good Part, will graciously accept and reward a sincere desire and endeavour, to trade and improve our two Talents where



where we have no more ; it is my own case, and its likely it may as well be some of yours ; we may be ready under discouragement to complain, alas, we can do very little, we want Abilities, want Opportunities, we can do almost nothing ; well, if there be but in us a willing Mind, witnessed by sincere Endeavours, I think we may take this home with us for our Comfort and Encouragement ( I do not mean to be idle, sloathful and careless, but chearfully to fall to work as the Lord shall enable us ) to wit, that we shall be accepted of the Lord according to that which we have, and not according to that which we have not ; we unworthily bely our Lord and Master, if we say or think he is austere ; the poor Widows mite was not rejected.

2. As for such as have much riper Parts, every way larger Abilities and fairer Opportunities than we, they must improve them, but it must be their Care to see they keep within the compass of their Places and Callings, and that they no way encroach upon the Ministerial Office which the Lord hath paled in by it self; this was very dangerous, and the way to spoil all; a Person may be very useful in a civil Society in a Kingdom or Commonwealth while he keeps in his proper Post ; but if he will needs be stepping up into the Throne he spoils all : but I do think none of us may need this Caution : And then as *Moses* said to his Servant *Joshua*, Numb. 11. 29. *Would God that all the Lord's people were Prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them ;* so this I dare say for our Men of God, that it would be no Eye-fore to them, but on the contrary, the joy and  
rejoycing

rejoycing of their Hearts, to see any in their Flock striving, if by any means they might come to be as wise and knowing in the great Mysteries of Religion, and every way as Gracious as themselves, and then endeavouring to make what they have ( according to the Rules of Christian Prudence and Sobriety ) as a Common-stock to the glory of God, the benefit of their brethrens Souls, and the furtherance of their own Salvation in the day of the Lord Jesus.

### QUESTION IX.

*How must we Carry towards them that are without?*

**B**Y them that are without, I here understand, such who though they are within the Pale of the visible Church, yet are out of Christ, and in their Hearts and Lives strangers to the life and power of that Christianity which they some way outwardly profess; and then I look upon the inward frame and temper of our Spirits, as comprehended in this Case, as well as our outward Carriage and Behaviour.

So 1. We must see that we do heartily, tenderly, pity and compassionate this their sad Case, a sadder then which I think I may say, is scarce to be found on this side Hell, though indeed the Case of some of them is much more sad then that of others; their Persons and Case call for pity at our hands; they are our fellow Creatures of *Adam's* race, and not of the tribe of Apostate Angels: *Again*, They are Men and Women upon Earth, and not among damned Spirits in Hell; their Case is very deplorable,

ble, and such as once was our own, and though it be not so now, yet also upon that account it may the rather be expected from us, because we now pretend at least to know better then others do, what God's Favour and his Wrath, what Heaven and Hell, what Salvation and Damnation mean; it is a thing both greatly sad and strange if we do not pity them; did we see any of them hanging by a small Thread over such a place as the mouth of burning *Etna*, would not our Bowels be moved, our Flesh tremble for them? Their real Case is sadder then so; meer Humanity would do much in such a Case, will not Grace do more?

2. We must take great heed to our selves; that we do nothing to harden them in this their sad and sinful Case, that we do nothing to keep them where they are; if we pretend to pity them as without, and yet care not wilfully to shut and bolt the Door upon them, this our pretended Pity is no better then a cruel wicked Lie; and therefore we must take heed that by our sinful Compliance with them, we do not confirm and strengthen them in that good Opinion which alas they falsely have concerning their own state and way: And so we must take heed of doing any thing that may justly prejudice them against Religion, against the good Ways of God; particular Instances are too many to be here inserted: But in General, every thing that is contrary to the Truth and Purity of Religion, every thing that is contrary to the Scripture Rules of Piety, Justice, Charity and Sobriety, is carefully to be avoided by us here.

3. We

3. We must see that we prudently, conscientiously, and diligently lay out our selves in our places, doing what we can to bring them in. And here,

1. We must endeavour to pray them in; the word is plain here that this is a thing according to God's will; the Lord hath a wonderful great respect for and delight in Prayer: And though he hath decreed to do this and that, and though his Providence may be big with it, yet ordinarily before it brings forth Prayer must come in, and as it were act the Midwives part; and this would be much to our own benefit and advantage; Yea, though such and such we pray for should not be brought in, yet being sincere this our adventure should not be lost, no but should come richly home, our prayers certainly returning with a blessing into our own bosoms.

2. We must do what in us lieth that they may be furnished with, and brought unto the ordinary necessary means of Salvation; when Persons are distracted, or under any such raging Distempers as take away their Senses and the use of their rational Faculties, it is then peculiarly the Part of Friends and Relations to procure them a Physician and the necessary Means of their Recovery; why the poor Hearts in the case before us, they are besides themselves, have this and that Death token on them, and are not sensible of it, and so care not for to look after the Lord Jesus, his Ministers, the necessary Means of their Salvation, any more then a Man raging Mad in *Betlem* cares for his Physician, or for his necessary Prescriptions; and then we should endeavour to bring by Perswasion such of them as are within our reach,

reach to the Means ; and such as are under us as Children and Servants , we may and ought to use our Authority with them this way.

3. We should our selves endeavour to recommend Religion, its blessed Authors ways, means and end unto them. And that,

1. With our Mouth's.

2. In our Lives.

1. With our Mouth's ; as we have a call and opportunity, let us be speaking a good Word for God and his good Ways ; O they are worthy of it, and we carry it very unworthily if we do not ; and when any of them dare let fly at God and Religion , we should with a holy warmth Vindicate them to the Faces of them against any their false Charges, their wicked and blasphemous Lies.

2. In our Lives ; here one might be large, but I shall confine my Thoughts, to five things, and that with all the Brevity I well may. And,

1. We should endeavour in our Lives to recommend Religion to them, as a true and real thing.

2. As a practicable and feasible thing.

3. As a gainful and profitable thing.

4. As an honourable laudable thing.

5. As a cheaful pleasant thing.

1. As a true and real thing ; they are ready to look upon Serious Religion as a meer Fancy, a waking Dream of a few weak and superstitious People , others as a cunning Plot and Design of some self-seeking Men ; tell them of Fellowship and Communion with God, they believe no such thing , though we are as sure of the reality of it from frequent, blessed, feeling, convincing, sweet experience, as of any thing  
that



that ever we saw with our Eyes; now let us labour to give them some convincing Evidences and Demonstrations of it, when *Moses* came down from the Mount with his Face shining, no doubt all the People that saw him, fully concluded that the Lord and he had been together; you will apply it; We speak of Heaven and of our great Hopes laid up there in their Hearts, they believe there is nothing in it, but are ready to pity, or it may be sometimes laugh at our weakness in laying so great stress upon these poor future unseen things; now let us endeavour by our Carriage in the general Tenour of our Lives, to strike their Hearts with this Conviction, that certainly they must be mistaken, that certainly there must be substance, reality and life in the business, we doing and suffering such things (when called to them) in the belief and hopes thereof, and at such a rate as they cannot. So,

2. Let us endeavour to recommend it to them as a practicable and feasible thing; be Religion true or false, yet however they think as these Preachers set it forth it is Impracticable, and so are ready to look on them and us as a company of Hypocrites for pretending to it; O that we did not give them so much occasion here as we do! But however be it known unto them, they charge Religion falsely, our Lord's yolk is another thing then they take it for, easy and sweet all over; and such of us as have had to do with his Cross have said, and can still say as much for that too, or the Fault hath been our own; yea, and they charge us falsely too, as they shall know hereafter at least, when they shall hear our Lord say that for us, which



at present we have no great Mind to be saying for our selves; but let us by taking out our Copy before their Eyes, endeavour to convince them while it will do them any good, that to mortify Lusts, repel Temptations, overcome the World, that to deny our Selves, forgive Enemies, bear the greatest Afflictions from the hand of God, the greatest Injuries, Reproaches and Sufferings from the hands or tongues of Men, that these things and the like, with the Strength which Religion offers and actually affords to those who do sincerely embrace it, are not such Matters of Impossibility as they take them to be.

3. That it is a gainful, profitable thing; they think many of them that to become seriously Religious, is the next way to poverty and ruine, the ready way to be undone; alas, that they should be so mistaken in Religion, the thing that makes us; *Godliness bath the Promise of the Life that now is*; whatever they think, it is certainly the surest and the next way to be Rich here, if the Lord see it good for one to be so; and God be thanked as he hath formerly, so he still doth honour Religion in the face of the World, by making some that are sincerely, yea exemplarily Good, very considerably Great in the World; but however it doth certainly bring the best Riches along with it; not the poorest Saint in the World, but he hath that which will more then weigh down all the Riches of an Empire; its true, he hath not so much lumber as many of them have, but for all that, he hath Riches which cannot be told in a pearlesse Pearl, in precious Jewels, in good Bonds; and be it so, that

we are most of us as Poor as they would have or make us, and may live under much Obscurity, and be little taken Notice of in the World, unless it be in a way of Contempt and Reproach, yet let them know we scorn the Motion of changing Estates with the best Man of them all; but they will never give Credit to us, or think that we really believe our selves, if they see us as discontented and uneasy in and with our outward Conditions, as hot and eager in our pursuit after these little trifling Vanities, and as much dispirited, dejected and heart broken under any our outward Afflictions, at any our worldly Losses, Crosses and Disappointments, as they themselves in such like cases are.

4. As a creditable, honourable thing; they think that to be called Religious under those foul dirty Terms the World hath put upon it, is a real and an intollerable Reproach; if we go to hear these pious godly Ministers, and become serious, O then (say they), every one almost will despise, spite and trample on us; No; no, you are mistaken; what says wise King Solomon in this Case? [*Exalt her (that is wisdom) and she shall promote thee: She shall bring thee to Honour, when thou dost embrace her; she shall give to thine Head an Ornament of Grace, a Crown of Glory shall she deliver to thee.*] The Lord is an Honour unto such, as some render that, 1 Pet. 2. 7. These are they whom the King will honour, and they are honoured by the wisest and best Men upon Earth, yea, by the highest principallities and powers in Heaven, nay, they have an honourable Testimony in the very Hearts and Consciences of the worst of Men, their greatest Enemies so far as they

they are Men and not turned into meer Bruits; and as for our parts, let them in our Life and Carriage see it clearly and abundantly, that we are not ashamed of our blessed Master, nor ashamed of Prayer, or of any Part of his Work, which is truly honourable, both considered in it self, and as it is his: But let them see we are of the old Apostles mind, who when they would make a high and holy Brag, what say they? *I Paul a Servant of Jesus Christ, Peter a Servant of Jesus Christ*; and so others of them.

5. And lastly, Let us invite them in, by endeavouring in our Lives to recommend Religion to them, as a chearful pleasant thing; if Religion be real and practicable, and some way profitable and creditable; yet, however for pleasure they think they are the Men, and us, they look upon as a company of poor sad and melancholly People, and so are afraid to cast in their Lot among us; now let us endeavour to rectify this great Mistake of theirs also, by letting them see, *that wisdoms ways are Ways of Pleasantness*; that it is no rare thing with us to find that sweet delight, satisfaction and joy, in the views and embraces of our Precious, though by them despised Jesus, which they never did or can find in any things whatsoever, which they account their topping Enjoyments; though truly where Persons are under those bodily Distempers, which much encline them to dulness and sadness, I think as the Lord doth so, we and others should give grains of allowance; but such should be especially afflicted with and strive against such Distempers upon this as one main account, as some may thence

take occasion to think more frightfully of Religion; and such should be very desirous that others did but know what is many times at their Hearts, even when they may think there is a great deal of sorrow and heaviness in their Looks, but especially that they did but know what there is at the heart of Religion; and be it known unto them, even to the greatest pleasure Mungers of them all, that we have those delights, such pure, solid, satisfying, and lasting Delights and Joys as they have none; for the truth of which we are ready to pawn our Souls, and all that ever we are worth in the World; yea, and moreover to give them leave to be judges in the case themselves, if so be they will but come and make a serious tryal of Religion as far as we have done, and yet there are far greater Matters still which many others have attained unto, which we are in the prospect and pursuit of.

### QUESTION X.

*How are we to manage our Spiritual watch?*

**I**N general I *Answer*, we must manage it after a godly Sort, that is in such a manner as that the great Ends of it may be best attained by us, *Scil.* God's glory, together with the safety, preservation and salvation of our own and others Souls. More particularly,

1. We must manage it obedientially; the Lord hath given us many express Commands for this Duty, *Matth.* 26. 41. *1 Cor.* 16. 13. *2 Tim.* 4. 5. and in many other Places; now it is not enough barely to do the thing commanded, but we must do it in Obedience to the  
Divine

Divine Command, do it because commanded, we must also do it with respect to the Manner of it as it is commanded. So,

2. We must manage this Duty universally ; watch in all things ; so the Command runs in one place. And here,

1. God is in some sort the proper Object of our watch. And that,

1. In what he saith.

2. In what he doth.

3. Particularly in what Answers he is pleased at any time to give into our Prayers.

1. In what he saith ; we should heedfully observe, take notice, what he speaketh to us in his Word, by the inward Motions of his Spirit ; by his Ministers, or by any of our Christian Brethren, or by our Enemies, yea though they may be wicked Men ; for sometimes the Lord may and doth speak to us by them though they think not so ; whenever, or however the Lord speaks we should endeavour to watch, so as to have our Ears ready open, so as that whatever the Lord speaks we may have it presently ; like a Person that's hearkning to one who is much his Superiour, when about to speak something that doth vastly concern him, whose mind doth as it were hang upon the Speakers lips, so that the Word is hardly got well out of his Mouth but he hath it.

2. In what he doth ; we should watch and take great notice what the Lord is doing ; observe gracious, merciful, so likewise more severe and afflictive Providences when they come, that so we may answerably receive, entertain, and improve them both ; we should thus heedfully watch and observe such Providences whe-



ther dispensed to our selves, or to others; to our Persons, Families, Relations, or to other particular Persons, Families, Societies, Nations or Churches.

3. We should particularly watch and observe what Answers the Lord is pleased at any time to give into our Prayers; this the Lord requires of us and justly expects from us, both upon his own Account and ours too; whatever the Answer be, if we do not thus look up and watch after our Prayers, we provoke the Lord who justly looks upon himself as affronted hereby more ways then one, and we likewise wrong our own Souls, which are like by this means to suffer damage several ways; but the contrary would both please him, and be much to our own Advantage; this is one way whereby we may come to enjoy more in the Mercies we so get, and also to get more of them. I know a Person whose experimental Observation it is, that the more he doth with humility and thankfulness observe and take notice of God's gracious Answers of Prayer, the more sweet Matter of that kind the Lord is wont to give him in for his Observation.

2. Our watch must extend it self to others, to our Neighbours, but especially to our Christian Brethren, those especially that we are joined with in the same Christian Society; though Christianity doth not allow us to be busy bodies in other Men's matters, yet neither doth it allow us to be of that wicked Persons mind who said [*am I my Brothers keeper.*] But,

3. It must especially be exercised towards our selves; we must see to keep our own Vineyard,



yard, and so we must watch over our Thoughts, Affections, our Words and Actions. Or thus, we must watch,

1. Over our inward Man.

2. Over our outward Man.

1. Over our inward Man. And that,

1. As depraved by Sin.

2. As renewed by Grace.

1. As depraved by Sin; and here a great part of our Work lieth; our worst, most mischievous, dangerous and deadly Enemies ly in our own Bosoms, a hellish brood of filthy Lusts, which are ever ready to betray and ruine us; Satan indeed hath a great hand in undoing Souls, but the truth is, he might spare his Pains, did the Lord but stand by, our own Lusts would do the work effectually themselves; we have reason to conclude that we should go to Hell readily enough of our selves, did but the Lord suspend, withdraw his Spirit and Grace, and so let us go quietly; such Enemies as these sure need watching.

2. As renewed by Grace; alas, Grace in many of our Hearts (I am sure, I must my self subscribe for one), I say it is a poor, small, weak and tender thing, if it be not very sickly, declining and languishing; this poor thing meets with great Opposition, a world of enemies both within and without, that it is as strange a wonder that it should be kept alive in our Souls, as that a spark of Fire should be kept burning in a great quantity of Water; we have need to watch our Graces if we would have them kept alive, and much more if we would have them lively; we must watch to the feeding and nourishing, to the preserving

and defending, to the acting and exercising, and so to the increasing and strengthening of them in our Souls; we must watch over our inward Man.

2. Over our outward Man; over our outward Senses; O how much Sin and Vanity is almost continually either coming in or going out that way unless strictly watched! We have need to set a strict watch, a strong guard upon each of them; and so we read of holy *Job's* making a Covenant with his Eyes, and of *David's* setting a watch at the door of his Lips. And so we have need to watch as to the whole of our outward Carriage and Behaviour, to see that it be such as becometh the Gospel.

4. We must watch over our two grand Enemies without us, Satan and the World; Satan in his Temptations; He is such a subtil, powerful, cruel and malicious Enemy, hath so many Snares for us, and is so good at the choosing and at the laying of them, that without extraordinary care and watchfulness, it is in an ordinary way impossible that our Souls should in any tollerable manner escape him. And so the World is a near, a present and very mischievous Enemy to our Souls; we have need to watch the Men of the World, and the Things of the World, both good and evil, for we are endangered by them all; thus we must manage our watch universally.

3. Diligently; so the Charge runs, *Prov. 4. 13.* And the truth is our Case is such, that its absolutely necessary it should be so; without diligence in our watch we do nothing, however that which is next to it, a Town that is closely

closely besieged by a potent Enemy, that hath also within its Walls a strong treacherous Party, ever watching for an opportunity to betray it to the Enemy without; sure such a Town had need to keep a diligent watch; the case stands thus with our poor Souls.

4. Wisely and Prudentially; one might instance here in many things, I will hint only in a few touching the Corruptions of our own Hearts, and the Temptations of Satan; we must watch Sin, so we must wisely observe and watch the first motions and stirrings of it to suppress them, watch the occasions of Sin to avoid them, watch to cut of that which feeds our Lusts; we see how vigilant and industrious Men are to cut of Supplies from an Enemy with whom they are engaged in War. This is a great piece of Spiritual Policy also; we must watch all Sin in general, but above all our special Sins; so we must watch Satan in all his Temptations, but especially in that which is as it were his Master-piece; we must watch at all times, but especially at such times as use to be most critical and dangerous ones with us, with respect to the Prevalency of Corruptions and Temptations, as such as are Persons of any tollerable Observation, may find that there are sometimes more critical and dangerous with them this way then others.

5. Prayer fully; the truth is, whatever Spiritual Work we take in hand, humble, fervent, believing Prayer, must come in at one End, or we are like to make but poor Work of it; and as to this of Watchfulness in particular; if we do not thus engage the Lord to watch over our watchings, all will be but labour in vain;  
our

our Lord knew full well what he did, when he linked these two together in his Charge [*watch and pray.*]

6. And to add no more, it must be constantly and perseveringly; while we are here we are in our enemies Country, and so are never out of danger, and therefore we should never let down our watch; but here lieth the misery of it which undoes us, though at sometimes we may make Conscience of this Duty, yet by and by, we grow careless and secure, let down our watch, and so we loose our selves extreamly, and let our vigilant Enemies get great advantage against us; and moreover some of us may find our bad Hearts most prone to this after the greatest enlargments in the exercise of Grace, or after the largest incomes of the spiritual Joy and Comfort; but alas this is perfect nonsense in Religion, for this is one time in which we are in the greatest Danger, and so a special Season for the strictest watch; at such a time the Devil hath the most aking Tooth at us, and bears us the greatest Malice and revengful Spite.

Thus we must endeavour to manage this Duty, obedientially, universally, diligently, prudently, prayerfully, constantly and perseveringly; this is easily said, but not so easily done; we must remember that serious Religion is a Labour and a Mystery, but withal for our encouragement, that it is the most Honourable, Pleasant and Profitable one, and that in it we have not to do with such a hard Task-master as *Pharaoh* was, who required full Tale of Brick, yet would not allow the People Straw.

## C H A P. X.

### *A Preparation for Parting with RE- LATIONS.*

**I** Am convinced, that an entire, humble and chearful Resignation of my Will to the Will of God, manifested in the all-wise and gracious Disposals of his Providence towards me, is both my Duty and great Felicity : And that I am bound to labour after such a Frame, when under the saddest of his Dispensations. I have reason to conclude, that the loss of near and dear Relations will set me hard ; indeed God hath hitherto wonderfully indulged me in this Matter, that I have not yet known by Experience what such Tryals are : But I cannot in the Course of Nature reasonably expect to be long exempted from them, therefore cannot but look upon it as a great piece of Wisdom to get armed and prepared for them ; and here I think it may not prove an unprofitable fruitless Labour, to draw up some such weighty Considerations , as may tend to work up my Heart to the Frame forementioned, that so I may have them in readines against that time when I shall find my self very unfit and indisposed for such a work ; and here I am the more confirmed , when I reflect upon the late disturbance of my Mind, when the Lord was pleased to bring my dear Father exceeding low , even so low that I concluded it had been just at the parting pinch, whose Death I will here suppose ; yet would I beware of the contrary Extream , a Stoical Frame and Disposition, being contrary  
both



both to the Principles of Piety and Humanity.

Here I would consider,

1<sup>st</sup>. The supream, full, and absolute Right and Propriety which God hath in me, and in all which I call mine; *the Earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof*: The World, and all they that dwell therein; a little while since I was not, even till God made me: And every moment I should drop into my Primitive nothing, did he not powerfully and graciously Sustain me; besides, I am by Sin exposed to those Miseries which are more deplorable then Annihilation it self, from which he hath by a miracle of wisdom, condescension and love redeemed me; from hence its evident, that I am not my own, but his: So neither do I enjoy any thing, which I can strictly and properly call my own; no thing's so mine, but that he hath a clearer Right, and juster Claim unto it; I received all at the Hands of his Bounty, and am to possess only during his Pleasure; though he hath conferred many Favours upon me, yet I am to remember this, that he hath not given away his own Right: No, his Right in his Creatures is unalienable; hath the Lord now resumed one of my dearest Comforts, taken away my Father? Is not this one Consideration enough to justify him, and calm and quiet me. May not the Lord do what he will with his own? And was he not his more then mine? His Creature, his Child, his Minister? O let me dread mutining against his Providence, but be in subjection to him the Father of Spirits, and live! Let me think with my self, it is the Lord, and let his Excellency make me afraid! *Be still, and know that he is God,*



*God, be dumb, not opening my Mouth because he hath done it ! For who am I, that I should stubbornly contend with my Maker , who is the Lord of all ?*

*2dly.* The Righteousness of God in all his Dispensations towards me ; though he sometimes doth Afflict, yet he doth not, he cannot wrong me ; had he not freely engaged himself, he had been free from all Engagements to the most innocent Creatures, so that he might have annihilated them, or used them at his Pleasure without the least shew of wrong or injustice : Hath not the Potter power over the Clay ? But alas, I am a sinful, guilty Wretch ; as I received all at the Hands of his free Grace and Favour, so have I forfeited all into the Hands of his Justice ; hath the Lord now taken the Forfeiture of this choice Mercy at my Hands ? I ought surely to ascribe Righteousness to my Maker ; doubtless Righteousness establisheth his Throne ; the Justice and Equity of his Laws, and of his Providence are equally unquestionable : And therefore should I fear as by Disobedience to reflect upon the one, so by Impatience upon the other ; would not Conscience presently step in, instead of a thousand Witnesses against me, should I once dare to think God Unrighteous in this sad Dispensation ? Will not my Relative sins ( besides an innumerable Multitude of others, together with the Corruption of my Nature which I brought with me into the World, from whence all proceedeth ) be enough to stop my Mouth ? O ! Have I not rather cause humbly to admire at the abundance of Mercy that is mixed with the heaviest Afflictions, that

at any time light upon me here? Cause to stand and wonder that I am not made as Miserable as Misery it self, as Hell it self can make me? Surely the Lord punisheth me far less then mine Iniquities have deserved, otherwise I had long since been in Hell amongst Devils and damned Spirits; as in point of Obedience, the Lord is now graciously pleased to accept of far less then is his dew, so in point of Suffering I have far less then is mine: And therefore should I patiently submit unto, humbly and thankfully accept of the present Punishment of mine Iniquities; it is my Duty to bear the Indignation of the Lord graciously (and good reason why I should) because I have sinned against him.

3dly. As his Right and Righteousness are unquestionable, so his Power is irresistible; He doth whatsoever he will both in Heaven and Earth, and there is none that may stay his Hand, or say to him *what dost thou?* Sure then it were folly and madness with a witness, for me to enter a contest with him. Am I stronger then he? It is my wisdom to meddle with my Match, but wo unto me, if thus I strive with my Maker; Ah, how easily he who could make the World with a word of his Mouth, and doth but look upon the Earth and it trembleth, how easily he could crush me! I am but a little breathing dust, he would surely blow me away with a blast of his Nostrils; what would the combined Forces of the whole Creation be in the Hands of the omnipotent God, to whom Power belongs? He could frown all into a confused Chaos in a moment; how easy is it then for him to deal with

with me? Let me think soberly what the Event of the Matter will be; *who ever hardened himself against God and prospered*, what am I like to get by my impatient, unsubmitive Carriage? Nothing sure, unless it be redoubled and heavier strokes; what more like then this farther to insense him? Will he put up so vile an Affront? Rather will he not humble me to purpose before he hath done, and make me know who I am, a silly worm, yea sinful dust and ashes, and what it is for a Creature, yea a Hell deserving wretch to fly in the Face of Omnipotency it self? A principle of self Preservation, is common to the very Bruits; sure then the Rational Soul is not without it: Where is it then, am I utterly bereaft of it? If not, methinks that should effectually perswade me to submit, and humble my self under God's mighty Hand, as a course more eligible by far, then by my proud and stubborn Resistance, even to force him (as he tenders his own honour and loveth me,) to spend more Rods upon my Back; yea, to force him from Rods to Scorpions: Let sanctified Reason possess its Throne, and lay a law of silence both upon Heart and Mouth, that so (the disorderly Motions of my unruly Passions being regulated) I may instead of charging God foolishly with my Lips, in this and in every thing give thanks.

4thly. This Dispensation though sad, yet is the product of infinite Wisdom; which should be a powerful Argument to move me with humble Submission to subscribe unto it: The King immortal, is also the only Wise God; none originally, essentially, and infinitely Wise but he: This attribute of his, he hath wonderfully

fully displayed ; have I not sometimes been filled with wonder and admiration , at the thoughts of his Wisdom manifested in the Creation of the World. Though I am such a poor shallow Creature, able to comprehend so little, so very little of it ; O, what a wise, intelligent Being must he needs be, who hath created Heaven and Earth, with all the Creatures their inhabitants, in such variety, excellency and harmony ! How great and marvellous are thy Works, O Lord ! Thy infinite Wisdom is Engraven in plain and legible Characters , upon the face of the whole Creation, so that he that runs may read ; and now I am to consider, that its the same God who at first made all things, that doth order and dispose of them in his Providence, and as he hath, so he doth, and ever will act like himself ; all his Works are perfect, all his Ways are judgment ; O, the Divine Mysteries that are in the Works of Providence ! Full little do I think what the all Wise God may now be doing with me ; my thoughts of this sad Providence may be wonderfully altered, when the Lord shall please to open the Matter more fully to me ; O what a day will that be, when the Lord will unriddle all his Providences to his Servants, and rectify all our Mistakes about them, clearly discovering their sweet harmonious Contribution to his own glory and our good ? *Thy thoughts are not our thoughts, nor thy ways are not our ways ;* O Lord, how little did *Joseph* think of his high Advancement, which the Lord was making way for, when he was sold as a Slave into *Egypt*, or when he was in Prison there ? He hath a thousand ways to bring his own Glory,  
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and his Peoples Good out of the heaviest Afflictions, and most dismal Dispensations that at any time they are under, and he not only can but will do it; its usual with him to bring light out of darkness, good out of evil, meat out of the devourer; sweetness out of the strong; O therefore let me stand still, and with silent Admiration, contemplate the Wisdom of God in the various Methods of his Providence: But let me not quarrel with him, or find fault with any of his doings! Can I mend them? I dare not speak such Blasphemy, as to say I can: But is not my Heart full of impatient, discontented, fretful, furious, or at least dejected Thoughts: If so, the Lord whose sole Prerogative it is to search and try the Heart, cannot but know it, and knowing, will *certainly bring me to Judgment for them*; he is as well acquainted with my most inward, deep and secret Thoughts, as others can be with my outward Expressions and Behaviour, being nearer to me than I am to my self: And he takes most Notice of them, they being the truest and most certain Indication of my Mind; one may best judge of the Spring, by the Water which doth immediately issue forth; and as a Man thinketh in his Heart, even so is he: O foolish wretch! Shall I in my Peevishness, enter a Dispute with Wisdom it self? Who am I, that dare thus to darken Counsel, with Words without Knowledge? For this thing let me abhor my self, and repent in dust and ashes: And for the future be dumb and not open my Mouth because the All-wise God hath done it.



5thly. The consideration of that amiable Attribute of God, his Goodness, should work much upon me; God is Love, a most sweet Notification of the ever blessed Deity; he is not a being that sporteth himself with his Creatures Misery: *He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the Children of Men*, much less his own Children; Judgment is his strange Work, but Mercy pleaseth him: *His tender Mercies are over all his Works*, and I have tasted abundantly of them; O how highly Injurious I am to so sweet and amiable a Being, if I entertain hard and black thoughts of him! *He hath caused goodness and mercy to follow me, he hath done me good and not hurt all the days of my life*, and shall I now bury the grateful Remembrance of all former Mercies, in my Father's Grave? *How many Mercies and Comforts he yet continues to afford me?* More then I can easily reckon up: And shall I in my Frowardness cast away all (as it was), because he hath resumed Part? O let me beware of such foolish Ingratitude! Farther, If I take a serious and impartial view of this Affliction, I shall find this bitter Cup is allayed and sweetned with much Mercy; it is not a Cup of Vengeance, the stroke not purely Vindictive; its not the Wound of an Enemy, nor the Chastizement of a Cruel one: No, the Rod is in a Father's hand; he is a God that changeth not, and so a Father when he strikes, as well as when he stroaks: What is his Design in this Affliction? Assuredly he intends me Good and not Evil; by this means he would set my Heart more against Sin, causing me to taste of its Bitterness: And wean me more from the Creature, shewing me its vanity and insufficiency



insufficiency for my Happiness, and so draw up my Affections more to himself, who is the only Soul-satisfying good; this is to mortify, and spiritualize me; to make me place my Happiness in God, and fetch my Comfort from him, and those eternal Joys with him; in a word, to turn me from Sin to God, to raise me from Earth to Heaven: And is not all this Good? Is not that good Physick which is a means to cure such mortal Distempers, and he a good Physician who doth prescribe and give it, though in it self it be a bitter Potion? But farther, as his Design is Gracious in sending this Affliction, so his Providence exercised about it is very Compassionate; this stroke might have come with many more sad and aggravating Circumstances, he might have given me a larger Dose, but like a wise and merciful Physician, he considereth my Strength; or, he might have left me to my self, to have sunk under this heavy Pressure: But behold, underneath is his supporting Arm; he helps to bear the Burthen himself lays on: And when is it so well with me, when have I so much of God, when do I enjoy such sweet incomes from the Spirit, as then, when all things look black and dark about me in the World? It's ordinarily God's use to know me, my felicity to enjoy him most, in the time of my greatest Adversity; O therefore let me kiss that Rod, which is bound up with so much love.

*6thly. God, even my God is all sufficient; a few serious Thoughts of this, may tend much to my Satisfaction and Comfort; He who is the only self sufficient, independent Being, is his Peoples Portion and enough for them all: O how hap-*

py do ten thousand times ten thousand of his Saints justly deem themselves in him ! And is he not enough for me ? Why, what's the matter ? Sure either I do not know him, or else my interest in him is doubtful, or I am inconsiderate, not truly weighing my Happiness in him : Ah, what a poor Creature should I be, had nothing but a God left me ! Why, what would I have more ? To have God, is as much as to have God and all the World ; have I him ? O then I have all in him ! I am ready to cry out, *wo is me, for I am broken with a grievous breach this day !* Ah, my loss how great it is ? I have lost a loving, tender hearted, careful Father ; one that had not only the name and relation, but the heart and bowels of a Father as well : How solicitous he was for my Welfare ? What care he took for my temporal Welfare, but especially, how concerned he was for my Soul ? O ! Methinks, I have sometimes seen even his very Heart in his Prayers, Counsels, Warnings, Reproofs, yea and Corrections too ; but now I am at once deprived of all : O sad loss ! Why true, my loss is very Great, it pincheth sore ; it is my Duty to be sensible of it, and much affected with it : But hold, what is become of my God, of my heavenly Father ? *He is yet alive, and behold he lives for evermore :* Let it be with me here, as it was with *Jacob* of Old ; when he was convinced that his Son *Joseph* was alive, the good old Man, his Spirit revived within him, and so let mine upon this Consideration, and let me say with him it is enough : Is it not he that hath cared for me all this while, and may I not humbly and confidently rely upon him still ? Is he not the same  
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he was? Nay, is he not in a more especial manner the helper of the Fatherless? What, though this instrument and the other be removed out of the way? He never wants Instruments to do his Work; he can either make use of new Ones, or do his Work without them; when his People are in Distress, if he see it good, he can and will create Deliverance for them, and that's a Work done without a Tool: I, but what will become of that poor Family? What will become of poor Relations? Why, by Faith and Prayer let me commit them all to the same God, who will look after and provide for them too; I have great Incouragement thus to do, whether I look at him, or them; the little knowledge I have of him may assure me, that they cannot be in better Hands: He wants neither Wisdom, Power nor Will to do them good; under his Fatherly care and custody, they are sure to want no good Thing, which is consistent with his Love to bestow, and their real Benefit to enjoy; and are secured here from all real and destructive Evils: It seems on purpose to strengthen the Faith, and revive the Souls of his poor Creatures under such Tryals, that he hath taken upon him those sweet relative Titles, of a Father, a Husband.—*Again*, If I look at them, I have farther Incouragement, having a comfortable Assurance of the special covenant Interest that the most of them have in this God, and a good Hope concerning the rest; now let God alone, he loves and will take care of his Children: Let me not at once both grieve and dishonour him, and torment my self with my Distrust! But farther, the loss is Publick; O

my Father, the Chariots of *England*, and the Horse-men thereof ! God's poor Church hath lost a judicious, faithful and painful Minister ; how many poor Souls that may want him ! How will that poor Place where he lived want him ? Well , though here is a wide gap made, yet sure, such a God can fill and stop it up ; which of the Prophets live for ever ? *God that finds his Servants appoints them their Work, and when they have done that , they must away and others come in their room :* He will not have all his Work done by one Minister, or in one Generation , but by a Succession of such in his Church to the end of the World ; so this precious Servant of his having acted his Part, is gone down, to make way for such as the Lord shall send ; having dispatched the Work given him to do , he is gone to his Great Lord and Master to receive an ample Reward : And still God's Church while upheld ( that is so long as the World stands ) shall be provided for.

*7thly.* The inconceivable Happiness his Soul enjoyeth ; the Soul of Man is a spiritual, immortal Substance, and Jesus Christ hath purchased eternal Life for all true Believers, and firmly entituled it upon them in the Gospel : So that their Souls no sooner depart this Life, but immediately they are with him ; It is my great Sin and Misery both , that my belief of such great and comfortable Truths as these, is no more firm and stable : And what a shame it is, that I should be so wavering about them, who have so long enjoyed the glorious Light of the Gospel , wherein they are so fully and plainly revealed ? O this evil Heart of Unbelief ! Well, I now see a poor cold dead Carcase, but what's become

become of the Soul, which did a while since animate it? No doubt it is with Christ in Paradise; O thrice happy Soul indeed! Methinks while I am sadly lamenting my own Loss, I should also rejoyce in his Gain, which is inconceivably greater; he is now possessed of that State of Bliss, which he hath sometimes so sweetly described to us: But how shall I proceed here? My conceptions of this blessed State, how low, dark, imperfect and confused are they? But let not the Lord be angry; he is now perfectly freed from all those gross Evils and Miseries which poor we Mortals are encompassed with; he hath now at once bid farewell to Sin and Sorrow both for ever: What grievous complaints I have heard sometimes coming from his Mouth, by reason of his Corruptions and Imperfections, though he had comparatively so little Reason? But now I know his Note is changed; He crieth out of a naughty Heart no more, being received into the number of Just ones made perfect; He is no more afflicted with perplexing Doubts and Fears; His shaking Fits are all over; A sweet serenity of Mind he ordinarily enjoyed indeed while here, but now his Peace is perfect and uninterrupted; Possession hath put his Title quite out of doubt; He is no more cast down under a Sense of God's displeasure; He seeth a Frown in his blessed Face no more, he complains no more, the Lord is angry with me; He is no more annoyed and disquied with Satan's Temptations, being got quite out of his Gun-shot; That old Serpent is now troden under his Feet, so as never to hiss, or put forth his Sting at him more; For temptations he hath



an everlasting triumph ; He is now got above a vain, tempting and vexing World ; How little he regards this worldly Trash, now he is got possessed of the heavenly Treasure ? How he would disdain, yea abhor any Solicitations from the World, was he in their reach ? Draw him away from his God with a toy, a shadow ? O vile and vain Attempt ! He knows better things then so ; The rule of the greatest Empire upon Earth, is far below the meanest of his heavenly Companions, thrice happy Creatures be they all ! And as for a raging, persecuting World, he fears it no more for ever ; let his Enemies touch him now with their Scorns, Reproaches and Callumnies if they can : Which of them will imprison, impoverish or banish him now ? Its a thing quite out of all their hands ; in his Conflict here, he was exemplary for his Faith, Patience and other Graces : And now he hath obtained a full and final Conquest, and with it a Crown of Glory which fadeth not : He is now perfectly freed from all other sad effects and consequents of Sin ; He is no more seen in Tears, and sad Complaints : Grief no more finds a passage into his blessed Soul ; fears no more darken his Delights : He is no more consumed with Cares ; He crieth out of a pained Head or Side, of a sick Stomack, or of weak and feeble Limbs no more for ever ; He is no more heard complaining of languishing, unserviceable Weakness, which hath sometimes been so great a burden to him : All his dolorous Hours, all his weary Nights and Day's are over and past ; the Lord hath wonderfully changed Chear with him : Behold, for paternal corrections, the highest expressions

sions of fatherly Love and Affection! The rod having done its work is quite laid aside, and he is taken into the lap; and as all his personal Troubles both inward and outward are at an End, so all relative and publick ones, of which he was wont to have no small share, being one of a truly tender, compassionate and publick Spirit: He is now no more sadned and grieved with this Friends sinful Miscariage, or that Friends heavy Affliction; He is now got out of the sound of the Churches Sufferings: Many a sad sight he had seen, and many doleful tideings he hath heard concerning the Church of Christ, which have deeply affected him with Grief and Sorrow, the interest of a dear Redeemer lying very near his Heart; but now no more of this for ever: He is otherwise now taken up; having wept freely with those that wept here on Earth, he is now rejoycing much more abundantly with triumphant ones above; O happy Soul indeed! But this is not all, may I therefore proceed a little farther? And the good Lord pardon my great Sin, the wrong I do thee in disparaging thy magnificent Bounty, darkening rather then otherwise the Glory of thy heavenly Kingdom, and his Felicity therein with my inadequate Conceptions, unsuitable Affections, and low Expressions! But what better can be expected from so sinful a Soul in Flesh? Lord, when thou admittest me to tast of the Tree of Life my self, I shall have other kind of thoughts, and be able to give another account of it? I am now thinking, what a sweet Story some Angel or glorified Saint could tell me concerning the heavenly State, who could thus speak from Experience! Well, he is  
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now with them made perfect; He is not only freed from sinful Imperfections, but hath his Capacity enlarged for the Reception of the heavenly Glory; we are poor narrow-mouthed, shallow Creatures, little that we can take in or hold: What would Heaven be to us in our present State? But its otherwise with him, being raised to as high a degree of Perfection as he is capable of; and according to his Receptivity are his Enjoyments: His large Vessels are filled brim full in the Ocean of eternal Bliss; He is got to the nearest enjoyment of God your chief Good: And what need I, or can I say more? O that I did but know, experimentally know what thus much meaneth! Blessed Soul he doth by sweet Experience, being got as near him as he can well desire; He now knoweth God indeed, *the knowledge of whom in Christ is life-eternal*: Indeed the estrangedness which Sin had created between God and his Soul, was hapily removed in a good-measure while here, so that he had much sweet intercourse with him; but alas! It was but in part, but this is done away, that which is perfect, being come; while he was here, he saw but through a glass darkly (as poor we do) but now Face to Face: And having this knowledge of God, what can he be ignorant of which is worth the knowing, or would any way augment his Happiness? And doubtless it would add much to his Joys, now he is got to the heavenly *Canaan*, to reflect, and look back upon the many weary turns and windings which he had in his Passage through the howling Wilderness of this World; but that which is sweeter still, indeed the kernel of all is, he now enjoyeth God in the perfect  
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and constant actings of joyful Love ; while we are forced to breath out many a sad complaint of the disaffection of our Souls towards God, he is breathing out nothing but love and joy and praise ; now he had perfected Affections, and a perfect sight of his Aimableness, and continually enjoyeth the sweet embraces of his Love, its a thing impossible for him either not to love him, or to love him with such remissness, coldness and inconstancy as poor unworthy we do ; and perfectly to love God, and to be beloved of him, this perfect, mutual and joyful Love ( I think ) is the highest happiness the Creature is capable of : O blessed Soul ! How pure and perfect are his Joy's ? What shall I say to these things ? O that I could feel more ! He hath changed his quarters indeed ! Glorious Angels and Saints are now his Familiar's, his continual Associates, which when he beareth a part in those heavenly Songs of Praise to him that sits upon the Throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever ; O blessed Place, blessed Work and blessed Company ! In a few words ( as he defined it to us while here ) he is now perfectly freed from all Sin and Misery , in the fruition of all good, being perfectly restor'd to God's Image, and admitted to the beatifical Vision and Fruition of him, in the most glorious Fellowship with Christ the head of our recovery, and all the holy Angels and blessed Saints in Heaven ; O famous Description ! And yet the one half is not told us ; now shall I be so unkind as once to wish him back again with me ? Should I not rather long to be with him, and in the mean time think well of the Rod, which is a blessed means to drive me forward in Heavens way ?

way? Should I not with humble Submission entertain this, and all other afflictive Providences, which may exceedingly befriend me in my Preparation for that blessed Place and State.

*8thly.* Death and the Grave, are quite vanquished and overcome by Jesus Christ, and surely this is a very staying, quieting Consideration; I am ready to think sadly of it, that his precious Soul and Body, that loving couple should be separated, their Union dissolved; that he in whom I have so delighted, whose company hath so oft refreshed me, that he should be laid in the dust, and have worms for his Companions, while I may see his Face no more in the land of the living; that he should consume and rot in the Grave, this goeth hardly down: But is there not somewhat of childish pity here? I am to consider that its only the Flesh that is the looser here, and that but for a time, which loss shall be made up with unspeakable advantage at the great Day of the Lord, which draws on; Death to his Soul, was his present inservicable Gain, as before: And why should I be so immoderately concerned for what the Body suffers? Alas! What was it but a lump of Corruption? Indeed while that gracious Soul of his did animate it, it was very lovely, of much value: But now the Jewel is gone, what is the Cabinet worth? Good reason why I should take delight in that House though but of Clay, while the heavenly Inhabitant was there: But now its gone, and House is fallen in, why should I so value it? And farther, what was it to him, what an Enemy? How much care and labour, grief and sorrow it hath cost him? A log, a prison  
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to his Soul; I may be sure he doth not grieve or grudge, that God hath now by Death thus disburdened, unfettered, and released him: But farther, I am to consider that Jesus Christ the Lord of Life, hath vanquished and overcome Death; if Death had swallowed him up, had made an end of him, this had been sad indeed, but God be thanked it is otherwise: He had a firm Belief of this great Truth, and the Comfort of it too, for in his late Sicknes when he called me to Pray by him, he bid me bless God for a Mediator, through whom he could say, *O death where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory?* The Lord Jesus Christ is risen from the dead, a main part of the glad tidings which the Gospel brings, which is good assurance of the blessed Resurrection of all those that belong to him; let me think oft of those sweet Words of his [*because I live, ye shall live also.*] To be sure the Lord Jesus Christ the head of his Church, will not have a dead Body, nor one dead Member, while it is in his Power to give it Life; as sure as he is risen from the Dead, and lives for ever more (which is as sure as that God is True, who hath declared it in his *Word*) so sure it is that whosoever believing him shall be raised by him at the last day, and live for ever with him: Now think, I have many a time chearfully bid him Good-night, when he hath been going to take his Natural rest, and why? Because I hoped to see him again in the Morning, and that more refreshed: And why should I grieve immoderately now? His grave is but a bed wherein to rest his weary Bones for a while, and I may not only hope, but have a confident well grounded

grounded Assurance, that the Morning of the Resurrection will come, when the earth shall disclose him, and the dust cover him no more; this shall not be an everlasting Night, an endless Sleep; No, his Body shall be raised, and that a glorious, spiritual Body: That blessed Day will e're long dawn; and how sweet will be the Salutation between that lovely couple, his glorified Soul and Body, perfectly delighting in each other, without jarring in the least for ever more? And how happy a meeting it will be for me, when I shall so meet with him, as never to be parted from him more? O! I shall have enough of his company in Heaven, and it will be better to me there, then it was here; if it hath been so comfortable to spend *Sabbath's*, and *Solemn-day's* of Humiliation and Thanksgiving with him here? What will it then be to spend an everlasting *Sabbath* with him in Heaven, in singing forth the high Praises of God, and of the Lamb? Sure I should not be so dejected with the sad thoughts of parting here, as comforted with the joyful hopes of that blessed meeting? Well, the time is coming on a pace; the Lord Jesus Christ is risen from the dead, the first Fruits of them that sleep, and by and by the Trumpet sounds, and that quickning Voice which will make dead and dry Bones live [*Arise ye dead*] will be heard all the World over! Then shall all the Faithful arise out of their Graves, with Bodies made like unto Christ's Glorious Body: Now what say I to these things? Believe I this? I have cause to be extream jealous of this naughty Heart of mine, which I have so often found tardy; and I may be sure of this, that  
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my own immoderate fear of Death, and dejection at the death of Friends, if it prove not the absence of Faith, yet sadly bewrayeth the weakness of it: Did I so firmly believe this great Truth as I ought to do, it would infallibly help me, with more comfort and confidence to resign my own Soul, and the Souls of departing Friends, into the hands of a dear Redeemer, who though he was dead, yet is a live and lives for ever more; therefore let me frequently and seriously think of those firm, substantial Grounds which I have for my belief of this grand Article of the Christian Faith, and with abhorrence, reject any vain and trifling Cavils or Objections, which may by any means be raised in me about it, seeing the Power of the omnipotent God is here engaged by word of Promise; and having once sufficiently cleared up the Matter to my Judgment, let me bring it near and close unto my Heart, and take to my self the comfort of it; and let the thoughts hereof keep me from sinking under this heavy smarting Affliction; while with weeping Eyes I am peeping into his Grave, let Faith the Eye of the Soul, which can see afar off, have a clear and fixed view of the Resurrection.

9thly. My case is not singular; none other Affliction hath befallen me, then what is common unto Men; the daily Experience of the World testifieth, that its no rare thing for Children to see your dear Parents head's laid in the Dust: And this if soberly weighed, might do something towards the mitigation of my present Trouble, when any Affliction befalls a Man which is strange, unheard of, this consideration

deration puts a signal Acerbity into it, touches the very quick; as it may possibly point at some signal Guilt in the Person on whom it is inflicted, or may be a token of God's signal Displeasure against him; but God be thanked, this is not my Case; I am ready in a fit of peevish, unruly Passion to cry out, *would God I had dwelt in perpetual silence!* Or, *would God I had never lived to see this sad and doleful day!* Hath this Affliction of mine its paralel? Is there any Sorrow like unto mine? But hold a little; what meaneth this great Heat? Is not this strange Language to come from the Mouth of such a one as I profess my self to be? Would not sober Reason utterly condemn it? I am not the first by Millions that have been in this Case; how many if I consider, that in a short time I may reckon up, and such as upon sundry Accounts, might have promised themselves an exemption from this tryal of Affliction before me, and yet it came upon them, and yet with such aggravating Circumstances as mine doth not; many have been snatched away suddenly, and such as they had just cause to fear was in their natural, unregenerate Estate: But I have had a fair time of warning to prepare my self, and as to his good Estate God-ward, better assurance I could not well desire; and what sayest thou? How wouldest thou have escaped the stroke? Why I would have gone first: By the way, I doubt my desires after Heaven are not rightly groundd; I fear I do not truly desire Heaven, and so am not like to come there ever the soener for such desires, if it be only or chiefly that I may be eased of, or escape and avoid Afflictions here; was I the most misera-

ble Creature in the World, yet the thoughts of being rid of Corruption and Temptation, thus freed from Sin, this should make Heaven more desirable to me, then the being eased of all my miseries here: But to return; was not he more fit for Heaven by far than I, more ripe for Glory, more meet for the Inheritance of the Saints in light? And is it not a thing very fitting and equal that he should go first? Since he hath been so hard at work, and so quick in the dispatch of it, why should I think much that the Lord should give this his laborious Servant a writ of ease, admitting him into his rest, before such an idle, lazy, loiterer as I? Your young Scholars who have made some good proficiency in Learning at your Country Schools, are sent to the University: But what should dull raw School-boy's do there? They must be whipt and whipt again, before they will learn to say their Lessons; just so its here: The Lord Jesus Christ the great Doctor of his Church, hath kept him a considerable time at his School here on Earth, and very teachable he was, he had learnt to take out his Lesson exceeding well, few so good as he, he had learnt Christ indeed, and so being ripe, he is gone to take his Degrees in the University of Heaven: Whereas, such a dull, blockish, sot as I, such a loiterer, who love my ease and my play better then my book; am like to have many a frown and many a blow, many a whipping bout before I can follow him, or come where he is, if ever I come there; if I hold on this idle, lazy rate, Thousands will get the start of me, will get to Heaven before me, while I lie loitering behind, if I do not in the

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end fall short of it; why true, I must grant that he was more fit for Heaven then I, and that God's ways are equal in taking them first, who are most speedy in their Preparations: But O that he would have spared him a little longer! Would he but have lengthned out his Life one Year more! Yea, how thankful would I have been for one Month, or one Week more? But one Day, one Hour will not be granted; He is gone, so that I must never see his Face more here in the land of the living; the dark and silent Grave hath inclosed, and shut him in; and that he should be snatched away so hastily, and at a time when I could so ill have parted with him, is not this sad? Do I not well if not to be angry, yet to grieve to purpose? Is not this a sufficient Apology for me, was my Heart more imbittered with grief by many degrees then it is; let me here a little expostulate the case with my self: And I must needs say this, that fretful Anger and immoderate Grief, are each of them both highly sinful and unreasonable; I beg, nay I command a true and sober *Answer* to these few Queries; hath not the Lord indulged me with him a considerable time, and that since I was in a capacity to have improved him? Methinks so many years Mercy of this Nature should seem something to me, who would now be so glad of one Day; have I not had many and many an opportunity of getting good by him, which I have carelessly let slip? Such a time he was preaching to me, and such a time he was praying with me, and many a time he hath been privately at work for my good, reproving, exhorting, directing and comforting me, both by  
word

word of mouth and writing ; how fain would he have had me been some body for a Christian ? But alas , *I have not known the day of my visitation ! O that I had been wise in time !* I may well give my self leave to grieve for my folly here in bitterness of Spirit : And farther , had I not good reason to expect , and a fair time of warning to prepare for that which is now come upon me ? The common fate of Mankind , more by far dying before his Age then exceeding it , should not this have put me in mind of his approaching change ? *Again* , the weakness of his Body , the many Distempers that have been almost continually preying upon him , was not this a fair item ? Hath not his Body for several Years , been like a poor old , crazy building , that must be underpropt again and again , to keep it from falling in ? How many supporters that poor tottering Cottage of his hath continually required , to make it a tolerable dwelling for his Soul ? Is it not a wonder , that so tender , neat and delicate an inhabitant hath not forsaken it before now ? Many a time he hath been at the Graves mouth , and seemed to have as good as one Foot in , when yet the Lord hath said return ; and shall I yet have a face to say , he was snatched away hastily ( as if the Lord had taken me at an advantage ) and urge this as an excuse for my Impatience ? This is shameful Impudence indeed : And farther , how many plain hints I have had from his own Mouth ? How oft hath he been dropping words of that nature , lest after all when the time of his departure came I should be surprized , and so taken unprovided ? So that its evident the Lord hath been no way a-wanting

to me here; and let me have a care how I reflect upon his Wisdom, in the ordering of this sad Providence, as to the circumstance of time; He doth all things well, and in their proper Season: To preposterate and act disorderly, belongs to such as I, but is below a Being so infinitely Perfect as God's is; speak out, is it a fitting thing that I should be his Counciller? That my Folly should correct his infinite Wisdom! Look back to hints of this nature given under the 5th Head, and if they be not sufficient, thou shalt have another Lecture and another after that, till thou be forced to yield up the cause, for God will, he must and shall have the day; and now seeing my Afflictions is rather singular for its alleviating then aggravating Circumstances, let it be my great care and endeavour, that my Carriage and Behaviour under it, be singularly pious and Exemplary.

*10thly.* My time here is likely to be very short, with which all my Troubles and Sufferings will expire; if I be one to whom the Lord hath graciously forgiven the everlasting Punishment, a truly regenerate, sanctified Person, interested in the righteousness and satisfaction of Jesus Christ (as I hope I am), I may then easily see to an end of these temporal Afflictions, Death will put a final Period to them all; and why should these things grieve me much, which shall not grieve me long? The length and continuance of any Affliction, or Calamity doth hugely aggravate it: This consideration doth most amaze and torment the Damned, when they think on their intollerable, insupportable Miseries as endless; was but that one word [ *everlasting* ] out of their Sentence,

tence, though it was inconceivably sad to be separated from God the fountain of bliss, and cast into the lake which burns with fire and brimstone though but for a short term, yet methinks it was not one half so terrifying; the hopes of approaching ease and rest, will make a Man go through present pain and labour with Patience; in the midst of my troubled thoughts within me, when I am poreing upon my Crosses and Afflictions here, let me think with seriousness and delight how short lived both they and I am like to be, and of those pure and eternal joy's that will abide me; I must expect a multitude of Calamities constantly to attend me here, Sin and Suffering being so linked together; it is a wonder of God's mercy that I am not afflicted only, and oppressed always! While I Sin I must expect to smart for it; if I reckon otherwise its fond and groundless, flat, contrary to what God in his Word, and in the constant methods of his Providence teacheth; what can the issue then be, but my most shameful Disappointment? Let me not therefore promise my self ease and rest and quiet here, as if this was *Jerusalem*, when alas it is the Wilderness; Yet for my comfort this, though the day's of my life here are evil, full of trouble, yet they are but few: What is my life but a vapor, which appeareth for a little time and then passeth away? My day's upon earth are a shadow, they are swifter then a Post, they fly away, they are spent as a tale that is told; what are a thousand Years to the eternal God, who knows neither beginning nor end of Day's? Alas they are as nothing! And what are they to future Eternity? A very small, inconsiderable

ble thing; then why should short momentary Afflictions, make so deep an impression upon an immortal Spirit, that hath endless Felicity in its eye? Should not the lively Contemplations of those eternal Joy's, reserved for me in Heaven even swallow me up, and make me as it were forget my present Miseries? Though for the present I am confin'd to this poor Cottage, and kept in hold in this dark, sinful, dirty World, and am put upon many inconveniencies, and endure many hardships here: Yet I may look up and see a glorious Mansion prepared for me, and be surveying a very large and fair Estate indeed, Heaven a glorious Kingdom, which the Lord hath made over to me by deed of gift, sealed and ratified in his Son's blood, which I am at present Heir to (through the abundant riches of his Grace,) and shall be put into full possession of when once I come at Age; here is something for my thoughts to work upon indeed! A large and pleasant Field to walk in by holy Meditation; had I never so much time, was I as well acquainted with this spiritual Art as ever Saint on earth was, and should I spend never so many thoughts upon this most delightful Subject, and make use of the greatest helps that earth affords, yet I should never be able to reckon up my spiritual Riches here, able either to conceive or express what the Sum of all amounts to; all this World is not sufficient to contain it! I am not able to imagine, what happiness Angels and Saints enjoy in one single hours Communion with God and Jesus Christ in Heaven; O then what will Eternity be! Blessed eternity! Here I am quite lost; how comes it to pass, that I can so easily forget such things



things as these? How sad and shameful a thing it is, that I should have a Heart, and find time and leisure to think of almost any thing else, but not of God and Christ and Heaven? And why is my Heart no more filled with heavenly Joy in such divine Contemplations? Doth Earth out-balance Heaven? Light momentary Afflictions, weigh down the crown of Life and Glory? Surely no; let it then be so seen in my looks, carriage and behaviour; let it appear, that I have other manner of Thoughts of future, invisible, eternal Things than the Men of the World have, that I do indeed look upon them as the greatest Realities, and am suitably affected towards them; let it now be manifested to the World, that I do practically believe the indubitable Certainty and unparel'd Excellency of the Saint's happiness in the life to come; I should live with as much seriousness to day, as though I was to die to morrow: And why then may I not be as cheary to day, as though I was to go to Heaven to morrow, not knowing but I may? And what a pleasant Life might I thus lead, let my outward Circumstances in the World be what they will! I say, could I but live from day to day in the believing views of near approaching Glory, what a comfortable Life might I lead! Why is it not thus with me? Where doth the hinderance lie? Is there any defect in the Object? No, no, its in my sight; its a carnal, unbelieving, a sloathful and negligent Heart that hinders me; away with such a Heart! And farther, let me think how great a part of my evil Day's are certainly already spent; now above twenty Years are gone, and for ought I know a twentieth Part

doth not remain ; Faith and Patience lengthen out a while ; *I* cannot have long to suffer here, it may be not near so long as *I* think of ; a few day's more and the Tables are turned, the Scene quite alter'd ; let me lift up my Head and hold up my Heart under present Pressures, for the time of my full and compleat Redemption draws nigh ; my Salvation is nearer then when *I* first believed , and every day its drawing on ; yet *a little while*, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry any longer ; its but waiting a while and *I* am with him, the loss of whom *I* am now lamenting, in the new *Jerusalem* the City of our God , where sorrow and sighing flee away, where God is all and in all to his Saints : To conclude, the time is short, therefore let me weep as though *I* wept not ; let me have Life with all its Troubles in quiet, enduring Patience, and Death with its blissful Consequents, in lively Hope and earnest Desire.

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The PREFACE to his CATALOGUE of some of his dear Christian Friends and Relations, whose Souls are now with GOD.

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**M**ETHINKS the sensible decays I have found of late are a fair Item, that Death is not only upon its way towards me, but that it may be nearer in its approaches then possibly I am aware of, and so a loud call to me, in good earnest to be thinking of it, and of that eternal State I must immediately thereupon be fixed in.

Sometimes I cannot but verily hope, that the Lord hath cut me out for Heaven (though there is not, nor ever was there a wretch upon the Face of God's Earth that less deserved it, nor can I think there is a Saint in Heaven that will have more reason amazingly to adore such rich, free, distinguishing Grace and Mercy then my self.) But yet though I have this Hope, that when Death turns me out of this World, I have a better Place to go to, and though I can thereupon sometimes rejoyce and please my Self with the thoughts of its Approach, while I look upon it at some distance, yet when I come nearer to it, I find my thoughts and apprehensions concerning it, and concerning the separate State of my Soul thereupon, to have much strangeness and terrour in them, which its like doth much arise from my Ignorance and Unbelief.

I should account it a blessed thing, could I but get to converse with these things in my Thoughts with that familiarity and delight as I wish; and there

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*is one thing I have sometimes found a little to befriend me herein, which is to think how many of my dear Christian Friends, with whom I have here had delightful Converse and Communion, to think I say, how many of these are gone before me, and so ready to bid me welcome to that our blessed home.*

*Indeed was they not with my dearest Lord, this Argument would loose its Force; Heaven was not Heaven, was he not there; O let me live with Christ, let me ever behold the King in his Beauty; O let me but have my fill of Christ, and then I am content to spend my Eternity any where, was it in a Desert, in a Denn.*

*But yet there is methinks some additional sweetness in it, to think of enjoying Christ in the Fellowship and Communion of the blessed ones above; and under the present, low and languishing Circumstances of Faith and other Graces in my Soul, it hath methinks some particular sweetness in it, to think of my old Acquaintance who are got to Heaven.*

*I intend therefore to have in my view a Catalogue of some of them as they come to my Thoughts, that so I may now and then make them a Visit, and take a few turns with them in my serious Thoughts, and this in order to the End above mentioned.*

## C H A P. XI.

*Ten QUERIES seriously Propounded to  
CARD-GAMESTERS : By one who  
much Questioneth the Lawfulness of that  
GAME.*

*Introduction.*

**I** Doubt not but some Recreation is lawful, yea needful ; and therefore a Duty to some Men : But among things that go under this Denomination, there are some utterly unlawful in their own Nature, and others which may be lawful in Themselves, are by the abuse of them rendred sinful, or at best very doubtful ; among many other Games and Sports in common Practice amongst us, I fear upon serious Examination, this of Card's will be found extream Faulty ; I shall give you some of my Thoughts, by Propounding the following *Queries* to you, hoping I may do it inoffensively ; and if I may prevail with you so far, as to be at the Pains to Read, and entertain a few sober Thoughts about them, I shall leave it to your Selves to draw up a Conclusion, and pass Sentence according to the Merit of the Cause.

*Query. 1.* Is it not unlawful, or highly to be suspected as such, to use Lots in so vain and trivial a Matter as Gameing is ? You will readily grant me this, that it is a Sin of no small Magnitude to take God's sacred Name in Vain ; I mean, to do it needlessly, or but upon weighty Occasions, *Exod. 20. 7.* You cannot deny but God's  
name



name is used in Lots, Prov. 16. 33. *The disposing of the Lot is of the Lord.* Not of Man, or of Fortune; it is an appealing to God's Sentence; and that this Game do much depend upon Lottery (if Persons play honestly,) is a thing notoriously Evident; I deny not, but Lot's have been, and may be lawfully used in some Cases: we We read of Divine Lot's which have been used upon a special Command, *Josh. 7. 14, 15. Acts 1. 24, 26.* There are also civil and political Lot's, used in dividing Land's, deciding Controversies, &c. see *Acts 13. 19. Neh. 11. 1.* And this is a proper means to prevent, or put an end to Contention, when Persons rest satisfied in God's Determination, Prov. 18. 18. *The lot causeth contention to cease;* To say nothing of magical Lot's, which are certainly unlawful; our Question is about loofery Lot's used in Games, and such a one it is; as I think must be carried in the Negative: That is, whether you may lawfully appeal to the special Providence of God to determine, whether your Game shall go for or against you; hath this no appearance of Evil in it? Is it not a thing condemned, by the same Law which condemns vain Oath's? Some think it is so, whose Judgments you and I ought to Reverence; but suppose it should not be a taking God's Name in Vain (which yet I see no reason to grant,) I would enquire.

Q. 2. Can you seriously and heartily Pray to God, to bless your Card's to you? Do you, or dare you use any ejaculatory Prayer to God upon this Account, at your enterance upon, or in your Game? On the contrary, have you not some secret misgivings in your Mind's, as to

to God's Approbation of it? Which brings to my Thoughts a Story I have read of a Poor Man, who had stolen a Calf for the Necessity of his Family; He got part of it prepared for eating: But when he came to crave God's blessing on it (as his use was), his Conscience smote him so that he could not do it. Sure I am, there is no lawful Recreation, but one may warrantably and comfortably beg God's blessing upon it.

Q. 3. Doth this Game dispose and fit you for the better discharge of your Duty? The most innocent and harmless Recreation is sinful to me, if I use it meerly to delight and gratify my carnal Fancy. Without doubt, duty is the end of Recreation; well, I will suppose you to intend a right End; I ask now, have you found this to be a proper Means for the attainment of it? Or, on the contrary, doth not manifold and sad Experience tell you, that it hath much indisposed you for any holy, religious Exercise, as Prayer, Meditation, &c. And hath it not sometimes unfitted you, for the duties of your particular Callings?

Q. 4. Is it not a great Time waster? You know Time is a very precious thing; we must do great Matters in Time, or we are undone for ever; and we have but a very little of it; only this little inch in present Possession is our's, and that flies away from us too; while I am writing and you are reading, it is marching away with winged speed, to the great Creator of all things, to declare what usage it had with us: Now you know, when we have but a little of any thing of great Worth and Use to us, we take it very ill to be robbed of it; then why  
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are we not more concerned about our Time, which is more precious then Gold? Now how many Hour's this Thief hath robbed you of? More then all the World could purchase for you, was it at your command; it should be a sad Reflection to you and me, that we should have so strangely squandered away so much of our Time, which can never be recalled; and now for our future Benefit, let us soberly debate the Case with our Selves, whether the great Concernments of our Souls, in order to another Life, doth not call for all the Time we can well spare from our necessary Employments here: And will you, the next time you are tempted to spend it at Card's, but ask Conscience this Question, is time of no more worth to me, who may be so near to Eternity, and must give so strict an Account of my Hour's?

*Q. 5.* Is not this Game made the Exercise of Covetousness? Do you not play with a design, and desire of gaining that from your Neighbour, which you give him nothing for? Is not this couching? And what think you by that?

*Q. 6.* Is it not an occasion of much idle, foolish Talk, of whole clusters of words about every Cast, and every Card almost? And doth it not frequently excite your Passions, and create unhappy Quarrels and Differences? I join these two together, because generally they are one at the heels of another; now what say you to this? What think you of idle Words, and sinful Passions; must we not give an Account for these things? *Objection.*

*Object.* But here you will (its like) be ready to object and say, you go all this while upon a mistake; we look upon it, and use it as a  
lawful

lawful Recreation ; we do not spend so much time in it as you think of ; and we play only for a Glass of Ale, which we are as willing to loose as win : And we are not for quarelling.

*Ans.* If it be indeed so as you say , I am glad of it, and so far you deserve Commendation in it ; if you can clear your Selves from what I have been hinting at, I fear there are but few Gamesters that are your Fellows : But granting this, I have one Question in this Case to ask ; that is,

*Quest.* Whether those you play with, be not guilty of some ( if not of many ) of those things, which makes the Game unlawful to them ? Whether they may not justly be charged with Covetousness, sinful Pleasure or Passion, &c. And if so, whether you can clear your Selves, while you take part with, and encourage them by your Example ?

*Object.* Are we bound to keep all other Men from sinning ?

*Ans.* I answer, you are bound to do your best towards it, and to take great heed that you no way contribute to their Sin.

*Object.* But here you may farther object and say, must we forbear every thing that another will make an occasion of his Sin ? At this rate, we must neglect a great part of our Duty.

*Ans.* To this I answer, though you may not neglect a Duty, to prevent anothers being scandalized or tempted to Sin ; yet sure you may omit an idle Sport, and an unnecessary Pastime : You may guess what the Apostle Paul's Judgment would have been in this Matter from, 1 Cor. 8. 13. If he would forbear eating Flesh so long as he lived, rather then cause  
his

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his Brother to offend : Should not your Sports be subject to the like Charity ?

*Q. 7.* Who are they that are fondest of, and most addicted to this Game ? Are they not generally, the prophaneſt Sort of Men, or the looſer Sort of Profeſſors ? Are not the moſt ſerious, ſtrict and heavenly Chriſtians generally very ſuſpicious of, and much weaned from it ? I deny not, but there may be ſerious Chriſtians that uſe this Game ; ſome that I have known, and do know : But how do they uſe it ? Not at the ordinary rate ſure ; if they do, they are equally, yea in ſome Senſe more culpable than others ; and I would farther enquire here, whether the greater part of judicious and pious Miniſters and Chriſtians be not againſt it ? I am perſwaded upon Examination, it would be found ſo.

*Q. 8.* Can it be any good Sign, if you can recreate your Selves with that which is ſo great a grief and burthen to your Miniſters, and many of your fellow Chriſtians, becauſe they look upon it as ſinful ? O ! How tender ſhould we be, in this Point ? How fearful ſhould we be of grieving or offending any of our Brethren, for whom Chriſt died ? He is very tender of them, and ſo much the more, as he ſeeth them tender of his Honour, and grieved and offended at Sin, whether in themſelves or others.

*Q. 9.* Tell me truly, how doth your Card's reſiſt with you, when you are in the moſt ſerious Frame ? When you find the great things of another World impreſſed upon your Spirits, in the moſt freſh and lively Manner ? I verily think if I ſhould fall to Card's, one ſerious Thought of Death and Judgment, one ſober Glance



Glance at my eternal State, would spoil my Sport; how is it with you in this Matter? If you must needs play on, will you make trial the next time.

Q. 10. To add no more; whether will the remembrance of so many Hours spent at Card's, be pleasing or tormenting to you, when you come to die? And whether will it be a comfortable or a sad hearing from your Judge, when you come to give up your Accounts; we must account as strictly for our Time, as for any other Talent we are entrusted with; and the Day which God hath prefixed, for this solemn and weighty Affair is drawing nigh; Death may be upon us, before we are aware; and when we shall see our selves ready to be arrested, and summoned to appear without delay, before God's great Tribunal: Then (if ever) Conscience will be reflecting upon our State and Actions; and when it shall find so much precious Time, at best but lost and trifled away, which should have been spent in glorifying God, and working out our own Salvation, what chideing Language may we expect to hear from it? I am ready to tremble sometimes, when I think what my own Conscience may have upon this Score, then to charge me with! Alas, poor Creatures! We make a shift to stop its Mouth now, or to stop our Ears: But if the Lord awake it then, it will speak, and so loudly as shall make us hear, whether we will or no; O Fool's, or somewhat worse that we are, thus to lay in for our own tormenting Grief and Sorrow! Now shall we not be wiser for the future, and live more like to dying Men? O that we could bring our Hearts to this, before we venture upon any thing, to think seri-

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ously with our Selves, will this be comfortable to me at the reckoning? Shall I like to hear of this another day from my own Conscience, or from the supream Judge of quick and dead?

Now if there be any sense or weight in the Questions I have here Propounded, I hope you will not think it an unreasonable Request, if I again earnestly entreat for your serious Thoughts about them: And that you would not proceed farther, till you can answer them to God and your own Consciences; one thing more, with which I conclude.

You cannot deny but it is doubtful and disputable, whether this Game be lawful or no: Whereas I dare affirm, and could (if need was) sufficiently prove on the other hand, that without doubt it may lawfully be forborn; and this is a good Rule for your Observation here, *In dubiis oportet sequi partem tatiorem.* In doubtful Cases we must take that way which is safest.

Since the writing of this, I am satisfied that a Lot may be lawfully used in Games, as well as in any other ordinary Affair; and that your extraordinary Lot cannot be lawfully used in any Case how weighty soever, except Persons have a divine Warrant for it: But though I see, and am ready to acknowledge my mistake in this Point, yet am I of the same Mind I was before in reference to my own Practice here; and I could heartily wish that all Professors especially, would be very wary how they meddle with a Game so ordinarily abused, and that is so full of Snares and Temptations, that without extraordinary Caution, they may as easily touch Pitch and not be defiled, as make use of it, and not be some way or other insnared by it.

P I O U S

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# PIOUS LETTERS.

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## LETTER I.

*To C. F. under her Sore, Relative Exercise,*  
 June 28. 1684.

*Dear Cozen,*

**I** Have been much concerned for you in my Thoughts since I saw you last; I would be one of those that weep with them that weep, and remember those that are in Adversity, as being my self also in the Body; and God forbid that I should not tenderly Pity, and earnestly Pray for you in this your afflicted Condition; though I have cause sadly to bewail it, that there is so much of wretched Self in me, which goes so far with me, that while I am at ease, I am little affected with the Hardships others undergo, which plainly shews how far I am from the Life of holy Love: There is a saying of wise King Solomon, Prov. 27. 9. *Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart; so doth the sweetness of a Man's friend by hearty counsel*: O that I was in a capacity, and had ability according to my hearty Desire, to write or speak any thing which might tend to your Direction, Support and Comfort; O what pains should I think too great (keeping within the limits of my calling,) to be laid out any way to

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promote

promote the good of any poor Soul, which my Lord and Saviour did so esteem as to think it worth dying for! And seeing you have been pleased in a great measure to open your Case to me (whom you shall ever find very faithful,) I will humbly adventure (though I am very conscious of my own Inability to do it effectually, and verily I think I have more need to come to you to learn, as multitudes of Years encrease Wisdom and Experience,) yet I shall give you my poor, confused Thoughts what we should learn from, and how we ought to carry under afflictive Providences; and I hope you will accept of my sincere Desires, though I fall very short in Performance, in the day of Adversity consider. A day of Affliction, ought to be a day of great Thoughtfulness with us; consider God doth not Afflict us willingly, without there be great need for it, and he hath wise and gracious Ends in what he doth; *His Rod when ever laid upon our backs hath a loud voice in it;* O that we had diligent and tractable Hearts, in hearkening to and obeying it: Learning some spiritual Lessons from every the least twig thereof! O what abundance of spiritual Good might we thus extract out of our greatest Evils! And what a multitude of Strokes might we thus prevent? And that you and I may be so wise, let us put the following Particulars into practice. *1<sup>st</sup>*. See we more and more of the evil of Sin, and hate and mortify it; Sin is the greatest Evil, and the procuring Cause of all those penal Evils which God inflicts upon us: Righteousness and Judgment is ever to be ascribed to our God, and all the blame to be charged home upon our own naughty Hearts; it is Sin which

which imbitters all our Comforts here ; O hate Sin, and take a holy revenge upon it ; *Afflictions are but the effect, Sin is the cause ; now remove the Cause and the Effects will cease :* O what brutish and unreasonable Creatures are we, who are so much in love with Sin, a thing so odious and hateful in the sight of God, and so mischievous to our Selves ? O unnatural we, who are so in love with our own Miseries ? Now that you may follow this Direction effectually, it would be a good way seriously to endeavour to find out what those Sins are, that have had the greatest hand in bringing this Affliction upon you ; for in many of God's strokes, his Hand his Rod points very visibly to the Offence, *I have verily thought so in several of the light Afflictions he hath laid upon me :* When God afflicts us in Relations, we ought with shame and grief to reflect upon our relative Sins ; I dare not but humbly mind you of this thing ; having found out the *Achans*, let us dispatch them without delay ; let us humble our Souls exceedingly for them, and earnestly beg the Pardon of them, and with all our might strive against them : O let us shew Sin no mercy ! Let the Lord see that his quarrelling with us, hath broached an irreconcilable quarrel between our Souls and Sin. *2dly.* Let us be led to see more of the emptiness and vanity of the Creature ; since our fall from God to the Creature, we are very prone to place and seek our Happiness in it, whereas our Happiness consists, and ought to be placed in God alone who is the chief Good ; and our Gracious God many times sees good to Afflict his Children, most in those things which have got the greatest share of their



Affections, and so are likely to draw away most of their Hearts from him: O remember (*dear Cozen*) our Head and Husband the Lord Jesus, hath a very jealous Eye over our deceitful Hearts, he cannot brook any adultrous Affections in his Spouse; when he seeth we are following strangers, and so growing strange with him, it much offends him; yet so constant is his Love to us, that he takes various Methods to recover our Affections, and if nothing else will do it, rather then quite loose us, he will hedge up our way with Thorns, and seldom that our naughty Hearts will be reclaimed till it comes to that; I remember an Expression of my Father, in a Sermon of his to this Purpose, I am verily perswaded (*saith he*) that most of the lashes laid upon God's Children here, are to pay home and sharply to correct them for some overloving of the Creature: As I said before, hate Sin more, so here love the World less. *3dly.* When ever we find the Devil tempting us to hard Thoughts of God, then let us stand up and plead mightily for God's goodness; let not our base, distrustful, unbelieving Hearts, be suffered to entertain any such vile Suggestions; when God's providences are dark and afflictive towards his People, then it is the Devils trick to do what he can to possess their Minds with black and unworthy Conceptions of him, as if he had an evil Eye upon them, and grudged them their outward Comforts, or did willingly Afflict them, or took pleasure in their Grief; so it is sometimes with God's Church in general: *Sion's* Language sometimes is [*The Lord hath forsaken, my God hath forgotten me.*] And so it is frequently with

with particular Souls under their particular Tryals and Troubles here : How have poor I experienced this sad Truth ? And with what shame and sorrow may I acknowledge the too great readiness of my base Heart, to close with such Temptations ? And if you do not meet with the same sometimes, I can assure you from sad Experience, your Case is singularly Happy ; and if you do meet with them with abhorrence, reject and cast them out ; fear, yet scorn to entertain them ; labour to recollect former Experiences you have had of the Lord's loving kindness ; *He is unchangable in his Love to his* : Think often what an Expression it is of his Love and Care, that he will be at the pains to Afflict you ; clearing your Adoption, you may thence easily argue that all your Afflictions are but Fatherly Chastizements : And O how would that sweet Promise of God's turning all to our spiritual Good and Advantage, *Rom. 8. 28.* if frequently, seriously and believingly considered of, make us think very well of all he doth ? *4thly.* Live by Faith upon the Attributes and Promises of God ; it is nothing below this, that will be able to keep up your Heart and hold up your Head above these Waters ; and here I would advise you, to seek out those Attributes of God that most suit your Case ; as it may be sometimes you are puzzled even at your Wit's end, and know not what to do, not what Course to take ; I believe it is so with you sometimes, is it not ? Your way is made dark in this Wilderness ; why then have recourse by Faith to the infinite Wisdom of God ; it may be you meet with a great deal of treachery and deceitfulness in the Creature ; in this Case, live upon

the Truth and Faithfulness of God which never fails: It may be, you may meet with cruel and harsh Usage from such, as you have no reason to expect most of the Contrary; in this Case, solace your Soul in the Consideration of those Bowels of Compassions, that are in your heavenly Father; and so improve all the Attributes of God, for they are all yours, and strongly engaged for you, if you be his; and so as to the Promises of God, seek out those that come nearest to your Case; promises of Support under your Affliction, and of Deliverance when the Lord shall see that good for you, at least of a blessed Sanctification of all to your Soul, which is ten Thousand times better then present deliverance without it. *5thly.* The exercise of Patience is another thing, wherein a Christian Carriage under Affliction doth consist; a quiet submitting unto, and acquiescing in the good Will of God; consider God's disposing Will in his Providence, is as really his Will, and doth as firmly constitute our Duty to Obey, as his commanding Will in his Word: And seeing it is his Will, that it should be so with you as now it is, endeavour chearfully to subscribe unto it; let it appear, that you are a Practitioner, yea a good Proficient in the holy Apostles Art, who had learnt in whatsoever State he was, therewith to be Content; what a poor Contentment is ours, if it depends upon our Creature enjoyments, yet, what abundant reason we should be Content with what we have, we deserve nothing, so surely ought to be Content with any thing; and if an ever Blessed God will not Content us, surely we are very unreasonable and foolish: And as for  
Patience,

Patience, O what an unreasonable thing is a fretting, murmuring, impatient Carriage in a Creature, and much more in a Child, under the righteous, wise and gracious Disposals of God's Providence; it is especially unreasonable and sinful in such, who may see not only God's Hand, but also his Heart in their Afflictions; therefore in our Patience let us possess our Souls; let us consider our Afflictions are but the just procurement of our Sin, and light in comparison of what we deserve, and they are but short, for a moment, and such as we have need of, and God hath gracious End's in them, and will bring our good out of them; a gracious Design (I verily believe) he is now carrying on upon your Soul, which could not have been so well effected another way: And in Heaven all our sad day's will be forgotten, only so far, as they will administer Occasion for God's eternal Praises. *6thly.* Let us labour after a joyful, thankful Frame; what abundant Cause there is, that we should not only be patient, but in joyful Tribulation; let it be our care to clear up our Interest in God, and then let us take a survey of the Heritage of his People; the many glorious Priviledges the Covenant of Grace entitles us unto, and then let us live up to our Means; poor, honest Hearts are frequently to blame here, in living below their Estates; alas, we place so much of our Happiness in the Creature, that much of our Comfort depends upon it, but thus it should not be; if God be our Portion, let us live upon him; let the World see, that however some cry down a Religious Life, as a sad melancholy Life, and however others exalt their own Fancies, Conceits

ccits and gross Delusions above it, yet let it appear, that we find that solid ground of Comfort in it, as can bear up our Hearts under our greatest Pressures; *dear Cozen*, how unlike are we unto, and how unfit for the blessed Society of Angels and Saints above, who are continually singing forth the high Praises of our God? Yea, how unlike we are to those we here profess our selves to be? Is not Praise ever comely for the upright? O what a dishonour we are to God and Religion, when every petty Cross in the Creature can sadden and sink our Hearts, whilst we have the God of all Consolation to live upon? O what strangers we are to our own Happiness, in being such strangers to a Life of joyful Praise? O what merry Christians might we be even under our saddest Circumstances, were we but duly sensible of our highly privileged Estate even here? Lord vouchsafe unto us the joy of thy Salvation! Finally be instant in Prayer; I bring this in last, because nothing I have said will be of use to us without some Divine Influences be fetched in this way; O be frequent and earnest with God in Prayer, that he would by his Spirit teach you what is the errand of this sad Providence; that he would help you by your Affliction, to see more of the Evil of Sin, and more of the Vanity of the Creature, and help you under it, to keep up high, honourable and good Thoughts of himself, and that he would help you to act Faith, and exercise Patience, yea, and to live in his joyful Praises; And here I would promise you my hand, the best of my assistance I can give you; that little Interest I have at the Throne of Grace shall be employed for you:  
Thus



Thus I have given you some of my Thoughts; excuse my boldness herein, I hope you will; I would have spent some Thoughts upon the particular Nature of your Affliction, and so of your particular Duties and Supports, but that I am deeply sensible of my own unfitness, and consider what able experienced Ministers and Christians, you may have opportunity to converse with; I must break off, being sensible my Pen hath been quite too nimble for me, I having been much more tedious than I first intended: *Dear Cozen*, I commend you to God and the Word of his Grace: This poor confused piece of Nonsense, the Lord was pleased to Bless; O what a workman is he? Let me learn this, if he will undertake a Work, no matter then how mean and sorry his Tools be,

*Who am affectionately Yours, I. B.*

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## LETTER II.

To S. E. July 16. 1684.

*Dr. S.*

**B**Y a hint from my *F.* in his last, I understand, you have received but two Letters from me since you went to *N.* But either you are mistaken, or else some of them have miscarried: but why am I solicitous about them? How little are they all worth? How little of God in them all? Which makes me wonder, why you should be so desirous of them: Alas, are they not as wast Paper? How much precious Time have I thus wasted in writing a little nonsense

nonsense to you? And not only so, but I have caused you to mispend time in reading that you could get little or no benefit by; but *Sister*, I would not have you think, that I have any inclination to leave of my wonted way of Converse with you; no I intend to be more constant than ever; only I am ashamed to think, that what I have done this way hath been to no better Purpose; O that we were but soundly Sensible of the worth of precious Time, on which depends Eternity! How would this influence us in the whole of our Lives here, which are but short and very uncertain? It is not for nothing that you and I are brought into, and still kept in Christ's School: Well, Dr. S. there is one Lesson I am very desirous to learn; I will tell you what it is, that so you may help me by your Prayers, and also bear me company; it is to redeem Time; a thing soon spoken, soon written, but not so soon or easily learnt; but the advantages that would come in by it, would more then counterbalance all its difficulties: Well, will you be my fellow Student? I question not, but you are willing; yea, I hope you are better learnt, a greater proficient here then my self; O happy Souls, who in Time know the worth of Time! O thrice happy Souls, that are so wise as to cut off all occasions of those sad Reflection, which I have of my mispent Time!

—*I am your tender and loving Brother, I. B.*

LETTER

LETTER III.

To S. E. August, 15. 1689.

Dear S.

I Receiv'd Your's, but am displeased with the Term you give my Letter; if you have got any Good, give God all the Glory to whom its due; and for a requital, help poor me with your Prayers; but I must earnestly entreat you, to be ever very Cautious how you mention any thing that may be an incentive to Pride; you would not think what a small Spark sets this base Heart of mine on Fire: O my Pride, my Pride! Yea, I am afraid least there should be something of it, in what I now write: O lamentable Case! O abominable Sin! And it is especially intollerable in me; you know this Sin is most odious and unaccountable in Beggars, and therefore in my poor, beggarly Soul: Dear S. I could tell you a long and sad Story, of a poor young Man under twenty Years of Age, who finds the old Man the body of Sin exceeding strong, who many Years since did lamentably Experience the sad Fruits and Effects of original Corruption, and that fears that to this day, his Lusts gather strength on him, instead of his getting ground on them; finding that his natural, sinning Principles are not idle, but ever active, and finding farther, that his frequent Acts of Sin have greatly encreased and strengthened the habit, so that now his Lusts do lord and domineer it over him at such a strange rate, that he is ready to fear some-  
times,

times, that in the end his Iniquities will be his Ruin, that he shall one day fall by the hands of his Lusts, which are got to such a head now, that they value not his Prayers, or any other Means that he can use against them of a Rush: Do you not pity such a One? Methinks, I see you ready to weep over Him, and engraving his Condition upon your Heart, that so you may ever remember him when you go before the Lord; why to deal plainly with you I am he; and do not entertain such a foolish Thought, as if I spoke worse of my self then I deserve; indeed I do not know how to do that; I do not fear wronging this naughty, sinful Heart and Nature of mine: *O what a mirror of Sin and Impiety I am!* Yet, who in my Circumstances so senseless? Indeed I have a Hankerchief lying by me, but God knows I have little need of, or use for it, and much more may I say, my dear Saviour hath full little need of one for my Heart; though he be willing and ready, yet I do not give him occasion for the Execution of his Office, who is the binder up of broken Hearts; but Lord, who is it that can break my Heart but thee! *O first wound and then heal!* I bless thee, for that little, small degree of Sensibleness thou hast given me, *O encrease it!* But yet Lord, how long shall this be the best Cheer I have to weep and mourn over my headstrong Lusts? When wilt thou by thy Omnipotent Grace, help me down with them? When shall a day of triumph come? Dear Lord, after thou hast got the Victory, wilt thou suffer these thy Enemies to come and spoil thee, of thy conquest in my Soul? Surely thou wilt not; *Break not the bruised reed,*  
*[quench]*

*quench not the smoking flax, despise not the day of small things, say to me, thy grace is sufficient for me; I am thine save me: But I would not be too tedious, dear S. I beg you would go and spread the sheet before the Lord, which represents my Condition unto you, though not so bad as it is, for indeed I want Words to express my own Vileness by; I had almost thought to bid you take a view of him, that is called the wicked One, if you would see a Picture of my wicked Heart: However, think of the vilest Wretch you know on Earth, and if I any way differ from him, no thanks to me for that; therefore think more meanly of me, and pray the Lord to subdue my Pride, and help me to entertain low and mean Thoughts of my Self; I do not know any Child of God, that hath so much cause to be broken and humble as my self: But I forget my self, for its time to break of; I assure you, you have no small share in my Affections, who hath great cause to subscribe my self as one of the holy Martyrs did, a proud and hard-hearted Sinner, L. B.*

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## LETTER IV.

To S. E. September, 6. 1684.

Dear S.

**I** Receiv'd your refreshing Letter, and blessed be God that I did so, for verily it put a little Life and Comfort into my Soul; I hope you will excuse the rudeness of any Expression in my last, and I return you thanks for your good Council,



Counsel, not to deny the Grace of God ; O I would not do so ; indeed, sometimes poor Soul, have such bleared Eyes with Sorrow for Sin ; that they are prone to overlook God's Graces O that I may never be guilty of such Ingratitude ! But no great danger of it upon this Account while my Heart is so hard ; O for more Humiliation, and more Sorrow ! Alas ! I am not one of those weepers, that take on so for Sin ; its true I am apt enough to overlook God's Grace, but its from another a contrary Cause : *Dear S.* my Condition is really the same as I hinted to you, and much worse : You may make your own to be somewhat like it ; bless God that gives you to think low of your Self : Well I would say something to the Encouragement of us both ; be it granted that our Condition is such and such, yet ( as you say, ) there is Merit and Satisfaction enough in Christ, and there is Mercy and Pity enough in him, and in his Father through him, for the worst of us, even my self ; our Corruptions are strong : What then ! Are they too strong for his Omnipotent Grace ? O no, they cannot stand before it ; believe me *Sister*, though we be weak in our selves, yet we have mighty strong Friends ; God and Jesus Christ, and the holy Spirit of Grace are on our sides ; What then, shall we be afraid and utterly dejected at the Thoughts of our Enemies ? O no, for shame ; they be more that are with us, then they that are against us ; God is my Covenant engaged to carry on the Work that he hath begun : think often of that sweet Place that hath oft revived me [ *I will not break the bruised reed.—* ] He will not do it himself, nor suffer any else to do

do it ; yet how hard it is to believe such things, to believe them soundly I say, when we are under our discouragements? Well, let us walk humbly, but no longer sadly and disconsolately ; it pleaseth the Devil, when he seeth his Design take so well with us as it doth, when he can deprive us of Peace and Comfort ; but our sad disconsolate Looks are no Satisfaction or Pleasure to our gracious Father ; He is no farther pleased with our Sorrow, then as it prepares us for the discharge of higher Duties, and the exercise of higher Graces ; he had rather see our Souls elevated in the highest strains of Love, Joy and Praise ; well, study we now in every thing to please him ; and that which is our Duty in this as well as in all other things, would be our great Priviledge ; I was troubled to hear that she whom I lov'd was Sick, but glad to hear you are better ; my Prayer for you is, that all things may work together for your Good ; your Mercies and your Afflictions I look upon as my own : The Lord bless you with Pardon, Grace and Peace ! Farewel,

*I am your truly Affectionate and Loving Brother, I. B.*

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## LETTER V.

To S. E. September, 30. 1684.

*Dear S.*

**I** Receiv'd your's, and am glad if my poor Spark added any thing to your flame ; but especially I am pleased with what you write in the Commendation of our loving Saviour ; I

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would

would be grieved when any Blaspheme that worthy Name, but methinks it sounds something like Heaven, when any are celebrating the Praises of the Lamb; indeed I have both seen and heard that of him lately, that would not have left me so Tongue ty'd in this Matter as I am, was not my Heart so bad as it is; O the Love of Christ, methinks it should be the burthen of all our Songs; methinks I would fain be saying something, I know not how to cull out a more excellent Heart, affecting Subject to write to you on; but I am afraid to meddle almost, because my low and ill Management will be but a disparagement of his matchless Love: O that I knew but what to think or write that might affect my own Heart and Your's! But what a strange Heart have I to deal with? What can affect me if this do not? O thou Stone, or harder if harder can be! May your Heart be more affected in reading then mine is in writing, and when it is so, O then remember poor me; O how should our Hearts be affected when we consider the Person loving, the Manner how he hath loved us, the rich Benefits his Love hath put him upon, procuring for us, or we our selves the Persons beloved! *That he the only begotten Son of God*, who was his Father's delight from all Eternity, ever rejoycing in his Presence, that he should have such a gracious Respect to us, such poor, sorry, contemptible vile and sinful Wretches as we are; that he should Love us, and that at such a rate as he hath done, even to die for us, and this when he knew before hand how disingeniously we should carry it towards him, even returning him Hatred for his Love;  
O;

O this is the most prodigious, stupendious Act of condescending Love imaginable! And then, O think, his Love is eternal Love; though he was not actually our Saviour from Eternity, yet he was so appointed in God's eternal Purpose and Decree; O that the ever blessed God should have such eternal projects of Love, for such worms as we! And his Love is to Eternity, for whom he thus loves once, he loves to the end; and should not this stir our Hearts if we have any Life in us, to think that the Son of God should have such a special Eye upon us, in his Death procuring the effectual Application of that Redemption he was then working out to our Souls, in whom there was nothing antecedently to move him to such distinguishing Love? O what shall we think of those invaluable Benefits he hath procured for us, as reconciliation, justification, sanctification and eternal Glory? O that I could get my Heart more affected with this astonishing Love! Lord I cannot comprehend, I cannot reach it; no wonder it passeth Knowledge, its Love in a Mystery, but I do and will admire it, and look and long for a sight of thee in Heaven; where I shall know thee better, with all the Heart affecting Circumstances of thy Love, being ever under the warm and melting Influences thereof: *Hath Christ so loved us*, what follows but that we hate Sin more, and love the World less, but Him more, and express our love in obedience to the things he commands us; and in a willingness and readiness to deny our Selves, in any thing dear to us for his Sake; well, I hope you will pick something out of these con-

fused hints : But my Paper begins to tell me I forget my self :

*I am Your's, I. B.*

## LETTER VI.

To S. E. October, 31. 1684.

Dear S.

**Y**OUR'S I receiv'd, and to your request, that we may hence forward live a Life of Thankfulness unto, and in the joyful Praises of God and our dear Redeemer, I heartily desire to say, *Amen* : I looked upon it as a great Mercy, that the Lord was pleased to give us to see the Faces one of another once more with Comfort ; but a greater still, that he was pleased to indulge us with another opportunity of joyning in that precious Ordinance, of sitting down together once more at his Table ; O what cause we have to love, exalt and bleis the Name of our dear Redeemer, who hath I hope brought us into a special spiritual relation to himself, and one to another ! *O how should we love him our Head, and one another as fellow members of his body ?* I thought I had loved you as well as I could before, but now methinks I feel a fresh and stronger Obligation, then that which is purely Natural ; shall we be fed and feasted together by our dear Lord, and shall we be hereafter glorified together by and with him, and shall we not dearly love him and one another ? Alas, but am I one of those blessed and happy Souls, am I ? What do I more then others, more



more then a meer painted Hypocrite may do? What have I to prove my interest in Christ, my title to his precious Benefits? Alas, my Evidences are most to seek; when I think what a difference there is between Heaven and Hell, and so between their Inhabitants, O what fears arise in my Soul? Ah Sister, these eternal Concerns of ours, are not things to be left at such uncertainty by us, who are so near them; we must not be satisfied with a [*may be*]. O let us go upon sure grounds for Eternity! Yet I find (which doth sometimes a little revive my Heart,) the Lord hath said, *he taketh pleasure in them that hope in his Mercy*; and I do hope so far as I know my Heart, that I have indeed chosen him in Christ for my Portion and Felicity, and that I do in the main, sincerely desire and endeavour to live to him as my ultimate End: But much ado, I have to make this out many times? Methinks, I can plainly see a pious Principle acting you; O that I was but as sure of my own Sincerity, as I am well satisfied concerning Yours! See if you can pray a little more peace into my sinful, and sometimes sad, and now I fear declining Soul, see what you can do; your Father (and I would say my Father) hears of you daily by me,

*whom am Yours, L. B.*

## LETTER VII.

To S. E. November, 18. 1684.

Dear S.

I Receiv'd an account of your Illness last *Saturday*, by a Letter from my *F.* and to let you see I am not unmindful of you, I here visit you with a few Lines, though I cannot at present in Person; and O that the Lord who many times makes use of poor, unlikely means (yet that when he pleaseth can do his Work without them,) would hereby encrease your Spiritual liveliness; I remember I receiv'd a Letter from you not long since, wherein you complain much of a dead and dull Frame, which I did not answer: Will a word or two now be acceptable? Methought, when I read your Letter it should have been my own, only for this difference, that you seem to be more seriously affected with your Case then I am with mine, who have more cause; O if ever poor Creature had need to make such complaints its I! Well, but do we not hear Persons most eminently Pious, making such complaints very frequently? We should not be quite discouraged as though our case was singular? How often doth warm hearted *David* pray for quickning, which argues a sense of his want! Sensible we should be, but not discouraged; O that we could confess and bewail our deadness more sensibly, more lively! But all our work lieth not in complaining, but we must use the means God hath appointed for our quickning; I verily

ly believe our greatest work lieth, in prevailing with our own Hearts, to the diligent, constant, and believing use of the means; certainly quickning enlivening Grace is purchased for us by the Lord Jesus; and now he hath gone through the most painful part of his Work, is he not willing to apply to our Souls what he hath purchased? O let us not once question this? O let us not wrong a dear Redeemer so much as to think otherwise of him! O methinks was I but once made a meet recipient of these influences of his Spirit, I should not doubt but I should have them! Well, it is Grace that must make us so, and we have a gracious God to deal with, who delights in Communicating of his grace and goodness to his Creatures; let us call to mind what we heard of this Subject, when we was last together; let us ply our Hearts with the serious Consideration of the Sin and Evil of such a Frame, together with the necessity, reasonableness, excellency and usefulness of the Contrary; let us pray hard for it and use other means: But pray S. take heed of that ungrateful Partiality, as to judge and conclude from the remainders of Sin in you, that you are in a state of Sin and Death; the best on Earth complain of deadness, and they do not Complement, but have real Cause for it; a perfect freedom from all Sin and its Effects, remember that is reserved for Heaven: Have you not a principle of Spiritual life? Else whence comes the Sense you have of your deadness? Methinks if I was with you, and you would be faithful to your self, I should not doubt but I could convince you; think as ill of Sin as you will, as you can, but

acknowledge and honour Grace; joyfully and thankfully entertain any quickning Motions you have, as you would have more; what I say to you, I would speak home to my own Soul, the Lord help me that I may! The Lord who is all perfect Spirit and Life, make us more like unto himself:

*I am your truly Affectionate, Loving Brother, I. B.*

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## LETTER VIII.

To S. E. December, 15. 1684.

Dear S.

I Receiv'd both your's, and owe you more than thanks for them, I would bless the Lord that hath directed us to this way of Correspondence by Writing, and that about the great Concernments of our Souls, which I hope may prove profitable to each of us, and very comfortable in the review; I am sorry to hear of the bodily grievances you are under; but stormy and pationate at the providential Dispensations of our wise and good God, I dare not I would not be; certainly if there be any true rest and satisfaction for the Creature, it is in the will of its Creator, who is goodness it self; and I am glad to hear of the calmness of your Spirit; my daily Prayers to God are for your spiritual and eternal Welfare, and that you may not want any good thing here, that the Lord would rebuke Distempers, and lengthen out your Life, but in that you are mindful of Death I rejoyce, for totell you true,  
I love

I love in my Heart to read and hear and think of Death my self; indeed I have now out-lived my self, my own expectation some Years: But O the unaccountable folly that I am guilty of in that I am yet no more fit to die! O strange almost incredible! I profess to believe a Future Judgment, that there is a day wherein the great God by Jesus Christ will Judge me with all the World, for all my Thoughts and Words and Actions, whether they have been good or bad, and so sentence me to my final State: But O how unaffecting are my Apprehensions of this certain, great and dreadful Truth, and how inconsistent is my Practice to the belief hereof! I am daily running on in my Errors, heaping one Sin upon the back of another, so laying my self under an unavoidable necessity either of bitter Repentance here, or else exposing my self to the condemning Sentence of a most just and righteous Judge hereafter, to a State of inconceivable and endless Misery, which is enough to make any Heart except such a Flint as mine, to tremble if seriously thought of: Well, shall I go on in this careless Frame and Course? I fear, I fear I shall, but God forbid! Well, there are two things I would commend to my self and you, in order to our Preparation for Death and Judgment. *1<sup>st</sup>*. Let us make sure of a true and thorough work of Sanctification upon our Hearts; O how shall we dare to look Death in the Face, if found in an un sanctified Estate? *Sin is the Sting of Death*; but then how may we with undanted Courage look it in the Face, and as it were play with it when the Sting is taken out, when we are passed from Death to Life; if Sin be  
dead



dead to be sure its pardoned ; so otherwise, how shall we think of Judgment, to which Death immediately carries our Souls ? Will God clear the Guilty ? The turning point at that Day will be, whether we be such as have come up to the Terms required of us in the remedying Law of Grace ; all are Sinners that is certain, but all are not impenitent, unbelieving Sinners ; O Sister, penitent, believing, holy Souls, and they alone shall be able to stand in Judgment, shall obtain Mercy from the Lord in that Day, and none but such have real ground of Comfort in the forethoughts of it. *2dly.* Let us labour after clear and certain Evidences of our sincerity ; O how sweet a thing is Assurance of God's Love, peace of Conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost ? How would these cheer and revive our Souls in a dying Hour ? Sure I am, a well grounded Assurance would then pay us our own with Interest, though we should be at never so much pains to attain it ; but how sad to be sent to bed in the Dark ; it must needs be very uncomfortable to a gracious Soul, to leave this World uncertain how it shall go with it in the next ; therefore let us study the Word more, which is the Rule by which we must be judged, and impartially compare our Hearts and Lives therewith, by which means through God's help we may come to know how it will go with us then : Blessed be God for that Revelation of his Will ! Well, that our mortality and immortality may be more in our thoughts, is the Prayer of your poor Brother weak in Grace and low in Comfort, I. B.

LETTER IX.

To S. E. January, 13. 1684.

Dear S.

**I** Receiv'd your's, and am glad to hear of the removal of that afflictive Distemper you have of late been under, a mercy I have been often seeking to God for, for which I am with you obliged, and shall endeavour to bless the Lord; I am rejoiced to hear you are so much upon the praising pin; O that I could but learn that heavenly Note: But O what a strange lumpish Heart have I? I talk of Heaven! Of an Eternity to be spent in the love and joyful Praises of God, and a dear Redeemer! Truly it is a shame while my Heart is so backward to, and unskillful in this blessed Work; O had Heaven no better fingers then I am, or am like to make, what poor harmony, what harsh melody would there be among them? But for the eternal Praise of the great *Jehovah* it shall not be thus; many times when I hear the pretty Bird's singing forth his Praises in their kind, I am ashamed of my self; I am generally secure and senseless, sometimes sad, but seldom joyful. *Ist.* Oh, how secure and dead I am; many times I have scarce any Sense, or feeling of Spiritual things upon my Heart; I have such a senseless, benumbed Conscience, through Custom in Sin, that I feel little of the weight and burthen of it, or of my need of a Saviour; alas, while others are joyfully praising God and a dear Redeemer; I have need to pray for a  
more

more awakned Conscience, and for more Sorrow for Sin. *2dly.* When my Conscience doth begin to speak home, and my Heart doth a little relent, then either my Sorrow is flighty and superficial, not bearing a proportion to my Sins ; O how many Tears I have need to weep over, as not coming from a Heart thoroughly sensible of Sin ? Or, else I am ready to be dejected, but it is more rarely thus with me, I mostly err on the other hand. But then, *3dly.* When shall you find me in a joyful, thankful, praising frame ? The Lord hath laid me ( though an unworthy wretch ) under many obligations ; I do not want Matter whereof to compose my Song , but alas I want a musical Heart ; well, I yet hope that in Heaven ( if the Lord will bring me thither at last, ) I hope then he will change my Note : That I shall then have no more cause to complain of this Heart of mine , but shall then with an innumerable Company of Angels and Saints sing a new Song to him that sits upon the Throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever, *Amen.*

*I am your Loving Brother, I. B.*

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## LETTER X.

To S. E. February, 5. 1684.

*Dear S.*

**I** Receiv'd your's , and return you thanks for it, and for your ( I do not doubt ) hearty Prayer for me, for spiritual Joy ; but O that you would help me to pray more Sorrow into my

my Heart first ; you tell me I know, *what they shall that sow in tears*, to wit Joy ; But if that be Scripture as I know it is, I may expect but a small Crop ; not that I think my Tears can wash away the Guilt of the least Sin, or merit the least favourable Glance of God's Countenance ; but Repentance, of which Godly sorrow is one part, is a necessary Qualification ; O therefore pray for more of that, and herein you will exceedingly befriend me ; I am afraid you are exceedingly mistaken in me ; I do not wish you so ill as you wish your self, to be in my State and Frame : Sure I am, if you did believe the Discription I have given you of it ( which I do again own and acknowledge to be worse then I did, or can discribe to you ) you would not wish so ; however if I do think worse of my self then I should, which yet I am confident I do not, yet sure I am, you err more on the other hand, in thinking better of me then I deserve ; and be not troubled at my Complaints : O will you not give me leave to Complain ? Was I under any outward Trouble I am sure you would, and that you would gladly endeavour to help me too ; and will you not give me leave to Complain of my Spiritual wants and burthens ? What, want Grace and not Complain ? Be so doged with such domineering Lusts, and hanted with such impetuous Temptations as I am, and not Complain ? Give me leave ; and will you not do what you can to help me ? O if you love me, help me down with my Lusts by your Prayers ; but I will not longer detain you :

*I am your Loving Brother, I. B.*

L E T.

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 LETTER XI.

To S. E. March, 8. 1687.

Dear S.

**I** Receiv'd your's, but have time to write but a line or two; I was sorry to hear of the return of your Ague, but am glad to hear it hath left you again; O that all fatherly Corrections might leave us better then they find us? I saw my F. lately, and was glad to here there was hopes of your getting home; I would not have you think I forget you as to that business you hint at; I know not how to advise you my self, but I shall endeavour to pray for you to him that can; however, one thing I will say, acknowledge the Lord in all your ways, then take his Word for it that he will direct your Steps: I am ready to think from some Circumstances, that there may be something of Providence in it, but let us wait a while and see what the Lord will do.

*I am your Loving Brother, I. B.*

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## LETTER XII.

To S. E. April, 9. 1687.

Dear S.

**I** Receiv'd your's, and was much perplexed in my Mind, not understanding your meaning in some Passages of it; as to your coming home,



home, I cannot but desire it, and methinks it is plainly your Duty, considering the Circumstances that you are in, and considering your poor Parents, how crazy they are, and in what need they stand of your help; *Dear S.* have a care of giving way to melancholy discontented Thoughts; remember former Experiences that you have had of God's goodness; have you not many a notable one? I believe you have, if you do but think on them; I remember an Expression of my Father, old Sins and old Mercies should not be forgotten, we should not give way to any more Sorrow for Sin, than we can give a good Account of, much less then for any outward Trouble; and what matter is it if the Lord should mark us out for Crosses and Troubles here, if he will but mark us out for himself, mark us out for Heaven; *O Sister,* all will be well in the End: How short is this Life, if we should have nothing else but Trouble here? Then comes Heaven, the day is at hand, and then all is forgotten; *O* nothing but joy, nothing but joy in Heaven, remember that *Sister,* the thoughts of Heaven are my own, and as thy own what would such Thoughts do? Would they not make all our Troubles here seem light? I will endeavour to pray for you as hard as I can; do you endeavour to pray down more of the Spirit of Prayer into my Heart, and then my poor Prayers may stand you in more stead; I desire a plainer Account of your Circumstances as soon as you can:

*who am your Loving Brother, I. B.*

LETTER

## LETTER XIII.

To S. E. May, 6. 1685.

Dear S.

I Receiv'd your's, and cannot but sympathize with you in your Troubles; I have been under those inward Troubles lately, that have taken off my Thoughts from other things, otherwise I have been and am under Circumstances much like your own; I have more and more experience of the vanity and deceitfulness of the Creature; O how vain a thing is Man! But I must tell you *Sister* (as I tell my own Heart,) I am afraid we expect too much from the Creature; we meet with disappointments in and from the Creature, who bid us look for better? Not our Bibles; The Lord will sooner or later make us know the Creature as the Creature, if we belong to him, that we place not too much of our Happiness in it, and we have cause to bless God for the crossiest Providences that are blessed by him to that End; O let us learn to live more upon God! And let us learn not to be too much concerned at such things; they are without us, and unless we open them the door, they cannot get into our Hearts to sink them; God is a true and faithful Friend remember that; indeed we live far below our selves, as I trust we are Heirs according to the hope of eternal Life, if we suffer such little things to distract and deject us; I had written sooner, but that I hoped before this  
to

to have seen you ; I shall be contriving for an opportunity as soon as I can ;

*who am your Loving Brother, I. B.*

LETTER XIV.

To C. H.

*Dear Cozen,*

**M**ETHINKS our ill husbanding the means of Grace hath brought us to this, that we must either beg or starve ; the Lord hath formerly afforded us rich means to live upon : How have we been feasted in his publick Ordinances ? Many a poor hungry Soul would have got a good meal out of our livings ; but now alas, we have almost run out of all ; now we have but hungry *Sabbath's* God knows ; what will become of our poor Souls now ? Well, but here is a way whereby you and I may get a good living still , by the right improvement of this Duty , we may be thriving Christians still ; shew me a praying Soul ; I dare say that is a happy Soul , that Soul hath many a sweet morsel from Heaven that others taste not of, that Soul is growing rich ; but then we must acquaint our selves with the divine Art and Mystery that there is in this Duty ; alas, our Souls cannot live upon the Wind ; words in Prayer are but wind ; but in the lively exercise of Grace and in Communion with God , there is nourishment for our poor Souls ; for your help, him accept of this small Sheet , which about two Years since I receiv'd , from

L

one

one that is as well skilled in this spiritual Mystery as any Christian that I know ; and when you are with God in this Duty , then remember me a poor wretch that after so many years Practice of it to my Sorrow , still find many roving, wandring Thoughts, much deadness of Spirit, and inactivity of Grace ; I am confident you are many times in my praying Thoughts, when you think not of it ; may I not beg the like from you for a requital,

*Your's, I. B.*

## LETTER XV.

*To C. W.*

*Dear Friend,*

**Y**OUR Soul is very precious in my sight ; my hearty desire and prayer for you is that you may be saved ; and O that I could do any thing to promote it ; it pleases me much to think in how hopeful a way you are for Heaven, and O how I should rejoyce to see you crowned there ; but alas, we are yet but in the Fight with our Enemies ; yet faint not, hold on and the day is our own, conquer and we are crowned ; yet be we jealous of our selves, I am ready to tremble when I think of our danger by our Enemy the World ; it is a very Cheat, and how ready we are to be imposed upon by it ? For my own part, I never thought there had been so much Carnality in my Heart, as I lately discovered ; and O I am afraid there is much more abominable wickedness that I have

have not yet discovered! O methinks I would have something besides God for my Portion, I am loath to cast all my worldly hopes over board; O my Folly! Well, my love to you inclines me to impart some of my Thoughts to you in this Matter: God and the World are presented to our Choice, and this is our choosing time, now that you and I may make a wise Choice. 1<sup>st</sup>. Let us seriously consider the excellency of God; O happy Souls indeed whose Portion the Lord is! O wonderful, wonderful! That the ever blessed God should be willing to become the Creatures portion, a portion for such Wretches as we are! Let all the Angels and Saints of God, admire and adore him for this his matchless Condescension and God-like Bounty! Now think what God is, and can we not be content with him for a Portion? What not with God? Why what is there that our Souls can reasonably desire, that is not eminently in him? O there is enough in God to make us compleatly and eternally Happy, and what would we have more? 2<sup>dly</sup>, Think we seriously of the Vanity of the Creature; O what trifles are these that Men make such a hurry about? Such as are projecting most throngly for the World, alas, what have they when they have got it but a little Vanity, for which they many time loose an eternal Crown; O woful Choice? When such come to die, they will put another estimate upon the World; I dare appeal to your own Experience, when you have any serious thoughts of Death and Judgment and the Life to come, then O how little you regard the World? I find it thus with me; now let us learn this project to set one



Enemy against another, to set Death against the World ; as one saith frequently lie down in our own Graves, and thence take a prospect of the World ; let us take our Coffin into the Field with us when we go to fight the World: And farther to make us serious, let us consider it is for everlasting that we choose here ; choose God in Christ for our portion and he is our own for ever ; choose Sin and the World and we loose him, and Hell must be our portion, and our loss herein will be everlastingly irreparable ; the Lord help us to act like reasonable Creatures ; but I must take leave ; if I have any interest in you , I would entitle a dear Redeemer to it ; Will you choose him ? I hope you have ; but will you renew and confirm your choice, and never rest till you can ; *my beloved is mine , and I am his* ; I am one that would fain be your Companion in the path of Holiness here, and joint Possessor with you of Happiness hereafter.

I. B.

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## LETTER XVI.

To C. H.

*Dear Cozen,*

**I** Received your's, and the doubt which troubles you, I find to be the same that I have been exercised with my self, so I shall give you a few of my Thoughts, although I am under discouragements, and have much ado to persuade my Pen to write, when I think I have  
more

more need to seek advice then to give in this Case; so far as I understand it, the matter stands thus with us, we fear we are not sick enough for Christ to heal, we are not humbled enough, our hearts not broken enough for Christ to bind them up; now its true those are deceitful flatterers that would teach us to slight Humiliation for Sin, this is a dangerous deceit, they will prove but unsound believers that were never soundly humbled; but we must consider all Christ's Patients are not sick to the like degree: The wounds of such are not all of a like depth; some the Spirit deals more gently and tenderly with, draws them with the cords of love, when others he snatcheth as brands out of the Fire; if the Lord hath done his Work, shall we peevishly quarrel with him because he hath not done it just as we desire? O let the Lord take his own method, so he will but save our Souls from Sin and Wrath! But its well if there be not Pride in the bottom, when we are so thoughtful about these preparatory Humiliations; we would fain bring something to Christ that might make us more acceptable; O deceitful Hearts, wicked Hearts! As one saith, why do we not complain more of our want of Faith? These preparatory Works are of no worth, but as they are means to promote a saving closure with Christ; our business is to enquire whether our Humiliation for Sin hath attain'd its end; and that Humiliation is sufficient as to its End, which prevails so far as that we cannot rest satisfied without Christ, when the Soul is so sick that it cannot but cry out give me Christ or I die; either we see our need of him or not; if not, why then do we complain of our selves as

lost without him? Either we are willing to be saved by him in his own way or not; if we are, it is a great dishonour and wrong to him to doubt of his Willingness; *He is more willing to save us, then we are to be saved by him*; when you object your want of Tears, that you cannot mourn for Sin, I can tell you a sadder Story which makes me write with wet Eyes, I say, I have more reason to complain of hypocritical Tears, then you have for the want of them; Humiliation and Repentance lieth chiefly in your Will: I remember a saying of Mr. Baxter's, there is more Humiliation (saith he) in a base esteem of ones self, then in a thousand Tears, more of it in a will and desire to Weep, then in the greatest abundance of Tears that come either from the force of Terrour, or from the moistness of the Brain; could I find more of this inward Soul humiliation, I could take abundantly more comfort in that, then in abundance of Tears, while my Heart is thus Senseless and feels little; when you speak of Reformation; consider the terms of the Covenant, Sincerity is accepted instead of sinless Perfection; and our dear Redeemer sees not only what his Servants are, but what they should be, and what they shall be: O happy time when we shall all see him as he is, and be like him! I take little notice of what you say of that Expression in my last; I am still ready to say as much, subscribing my self a Scholar in the lowest Form in the School of the Lord Jesus.

I. B.

LETTER

LETTER XVII.

To C. H.

*Dear Cozen,*

**T**HE reading of your last, wherein you did acquaint me with the good Success of my poor worthless Paper, did much refresh my Spirit; indeed I cannot but look upon your Estate as you describe it to be safe and happy; O how glad should I be many times of clear Evidences of so much? What Comfort may be safely drawn from such Premises? As to what you say, that you fear its only a good Mood that you are in; it must be granted that natural unregenerate Persons have their good Moods sometimes, but I think they never come in them to a sincere willingness and resolution, to close with a Gospel Christ on Gospel Terms; they may have some faint Wishes and Desires, but the Mood is off them before any change is wrought upon their Hearts and Wills, and when it leaves them they are more hardened and secure then before; and while they are in such a Frame they are out of their Element, like Fishes in the Air; but I am confidently perswaded that you find it otherwise with your self, when you find your Heart in a holy good Frame, you are where you would be, and when you find it otherwise, it is your grief and burthen; O how glad you would be, was there no such sad and sinful interruptions in your Communion with God and a dear Redeemer? Such a happiness as this, is well worth dying

for; and why should you be discouraged at that which is the common Case of all God's Children upon Earth? Go to the holiest Saint you know, and I warrant you he will freely acknowledge that he hath his up's and down's; if it be not so, then wo to such as I, who alas can seldom find my Heart in any good Frame; while we have Flesh as well as Spirit, we must expect that the Flesh will be acting its part, and its well that we have a spiritual Principle to oppose it, and happy they who have Faith and Patience to continue this Conflict, such shall certainly come off conquerors at last; but I would not be too tedious; upon any occasion, no Friend you have, shall be more ready to communicate Experiences, or shall more rejoice in being any way instrumental of the Good of your Soul than my self, who though very weak, yet am truly willing; the Lord be your Guide and Portion,

*I am affectionately your's, I. B.*

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## LETTER XVIII.

*To C. H.*

*Dear Cozen,*

**I**N compliance with your request, I will tell you what it was that moved me to give you those my Sentiments of your Condition; it was this, that your Humiliation had this Fruit, that nothing could content you without Christ; and that as far as you know your own Heart, you are willing to be saved by him in his own Way,



Way, and in his Strength to mortify Corruption, which I am sure is more then Flesh and Blood could teach you; I desire, you may be truly serious, sensible and humble, but I would not have you turn an unmerciful false Accuser of your self; Assurance is a great Mercy where vouchsafed and improved, but it is of far greater moment to us, that we have Grace and use and exercise it, then that we know we have it; let the most of your time and care and thoughts, be spent in the getting and exercising of Grace, and wait upon God for comfort in his Time and Way; and when you want Evidences of special Grace, then as Mr. B. adviseth, improve the general Grounds of Comfort, as the merciful Nature of God, the merciful Nature and Office, and the all-sufficiency of a Redeemer, the extent of the Covenant of Grace, and so the possibility, probability, yea the conditional Certainty of your Salvation if you come up to covenant Terms; abundance of Comfort might be fetched in by the serious Consideration of these things; and if you find that trying your self by Marks, be ineffectual as to helping you to Comfort, but that you are rather more disordered by it, your doubts encreasing, would you spend your time in endeavouring to exercise Grace, in putting forth fresh acts of Faith on Christ, and in exercising Love to God and the like, would you I say but take this Course a while, I am perswaded you would find it a more ready way to Satisfaction and Comfort, then by trying your self by Marks unseasonably: Thus you might come to feel that you do believe, and feel that you love God, &c. when you complain of the weakness

ness of Grace and strength of Corruption and the like, consider, you are to distinguish between that which is matter of Humiliation and for Reformation, and that which is matter of Doubting; the Lord when he hath prepared you for it, *cause his face to shine upon you*, and order it so, that the present shakings you are under may tend to, and issue in your more firm Settlement:

*I am affectionately your's, I. B.*

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## LETTER XIX.

*To my M.*

*Dear M.*

**I** Cannot but really sympathize with you under your present Troubles; methinks I feel part of the burthen that lieth upon you, O that I could do any thing to make it more easy and light to you! But alas I can do little more then pray for you; well, as your Troubles abound, so may your Graces and Comforts abound much more! May your Soul prosper indeed! May all your outward Troubles prove spiritually Advantageous! If so, I both may and will rejoyce in your Happiness; I take it for a certain Truth, that it goeth well or ill with us as Matters go with our Souls; alas, what are those Mercies worth that do not someway reach our Souls? And why should we not prize those Afflictions that further their Salvation, and love that God the better that sends them? Sure I am, these sick Souls of our's need Physick as well as Food,  
and

and why should we not bless God for the one as well as for the other, when both tend to promote our spiritual Health ? O that we were brought to kiss the Rod, patiently, chearfully and thankfully to submit to the Lord's severest Discipline, who intends us good and not hurt, and will issue all things well ! Dear *M.* chear up as well as you can ; labour to get above this lower Region ; O what solid Comforts may be fetched from Heaven in our darkest Hours here ! O how great, how sure, how near is our reward there ! *Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, nor hath it entered into the Heart of Man to conceive what God hath laid up for them that love him ;* and all this ( we none of us know how much, ) as sure as the decree and promise of the Faithful and unchangeable God can make it ; and near too ; *The Lord is at hand, he saith, behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me ;* dear *M.* Comfort your self with these Words ; be very careful of your self, least grief be added to our Affliction : My dear *F.* though I have not time to write, is much in my Thoughts ; his illness hath damped my Spirit in that Business you know of ; many Friends are inquisitive about him, and I hope many Prayers are going up to Heaven for him here :

—*I am your loving obedient Servant, I. B.*

LETTER

## LETTER XX.

To S. E.

Dear S.

**H**AVING a little time I resolved to write a line or two, hoping they would not be unwelcome; I have little business except Soul concerns to write about, but indeed that is our greatest Business, these our grand Concerns, and all other things even those we call Matters of Weight, great Concerns, they are but trifles compared with these; it is a great Comfort to me when I think what comfortable Evidences I hope I have of the good Estate of your Soul; I think my self happy in having so many Relations related to Jesus Christ; O happy Family, highly favoured of the Lord, that is likely to turn out so many Souls for Heaven! O S. make sure to be one, and pray hard for me that I may be another, yea that there may not be one outcast amongst us; and labour to get as long an Heaven as ever you can; O we may begin Heaven even here! O how much more of Heaven might we enjoy then we do? Well, I will tell you what I would be pressing after, even to maintain a constant, strict and holy Communion with God in and through Christ; O the sweetness of Communion with God? Oh, our unspeakable loss in having Hearts so alienated from God, and in being such strangers to a heavenly Life? Lord, how long shall it be thus? How long ere we may love and enjoy thee perfectly, without the least intermission,

termiffion, interruption or ceffation? O this body of Sin ! And O this body of Flefh ! Well, it is our happinefs to defire and long and wait with Patience for that, which others (happy they are) do poffefs and enjoy with fulleft fatisfaction; may our Souls now be following harder after God ? May we now live like believers, a life of holy Love and joyful praifes ? I am much concerned for poor F. but can do little to help him, only I pray as hard for him as I can ; be as careful as you can poor M. that ſhe be not brought down to :

*I am affectionately Your's, I. B.*

## LETTER XXI.

*To my F.*

*Dear. F.*

**N**OW I am beginning to write, comes to mind God's great goodnefs in that I have yet a F. to write to ; I have great caufe to fing aloud of Mercy ; the Lord punifheth lefs then my iniquity deferveth ; he doth but fhake the Rod to let me fee what I deferve, and he can do at pleafure, that I ly every way at Mercy, when he might ftrike home indeed ; O that my Heart ſhould be no more affected with fo great Mercy ! O how far the Lord will fall ſhort of that tribute of Praise due from me ! O that he would help me, yea, O that all my Friends would help me by their Prayers, that I may love and praife God more, who is continually every way doing me good ; O what a pittty, what



what a shame so good a God should be loved, saved and praised no more! Was not Earth what it is, was not my Heart what it is, is was impossible; but I live in hopes it will be better e're long; O happy Place, and happy Persons, whose continual Work is perfect love, and joy and praise!

—*I am your loving obedient S. I. B.*

## LETTER XXII.

To T. W.

*My dear F.*

**Y**OUR lines were very welcome to me, both as they express your Affection to me, your readiness to Simpathize with me, your hearty Prayers to God for me, and likewise as they give some revival to our former intercourse, which my thoughts were working upon a day or two since, with much desire; I can heartily bless God for the comfortable Society I have formerly had with you; O can we not both of us remember many an Hour with Comfort, when the Lord hath been pleased to make a Third with us? Yea, and I hope when a few Minutes of Time more are past, we shall be removed out of this Vale of Tears, and meet upon the Mountains of Spices; O a happy meeting that will be, will it not think you? O should we not be looking and longing, and with Patience waiting for that blessed Day? And should we not be quickning and encouraging one another in the way? It is my hearty  
desire

desire now we cannot so frequently pray and discourse together as we have formerly done, I am perswaded to the great Satisfaction of us both, it is my desire I say, that we may maintain a mutual Correspondence by writing : And methinks I have much to tell my Friend of now, but that streightness of Time, and some bodily Indispositions will not suffer me ; the dispensations of the Lord towards me are very Gracious ; O how manifold are his Mercies ? Indeed goodness and mercy hath followed me all my Days ; and methinks there is so much of Love mixed with the severest of his Dispensations towards me, that I cannot but love him the more, and praise him the more for them ; O they are not the wounds of an enemy, nor the chastizements of a cruel one ; God is all love yet, even when he takes, as well as when he gives ; O to see Love in every thing, is not that sweet ? O what is this Heart of mine made of, that it is no more affected ? O help me, love the Lord for me, praise the Lord for me, come let us exalt his Name together ; the Lord hath dealt very favourable as to my F. his Distemper not so violent as it might have been, though his Weakness hath been very great ; how the Lord may dispose of him I cannot tell, he continues very Weak, though I hope the Distemper is much abated, but this I know, God will do all things well ; pray for us still, yea and praise the Lord on our behalf :

*I am affectionally Your's, I. B.*

LETTER

## LETTER XXIII.

To S. M.

Dear S.

I Hope you will not take it ill that you have not heard from me before now; I am sure you are much in my thoughts, and I should be glad to exchange a Letter with you now and then; I had many affectionate concerned Thoughts about you when I heard of your late illness, and it was not a little Comfort to me when I heard of your recovery, much more shall the health and prosperity of your Soul rejoyce my Heart; and that it may be daily promoted by all the Methods of God's Providence, as well as by his Ordinances, is and shall be my daily Prayer to that God who I hope hath begun a good Work there: Dear S. the near Relation I am in to you, lays me under a strong Obligation to do the utmost I am able to promote the welfare of your outward Man, but methinks I feel my Affections especially working towards your Soul: Well, how is it? Is your Soul in health? Doth your Soul prosper? By nature our Souls are like Hospitals for spiritual Diseases; O there is no sound Part left in them; but the Lord out of his Divine pity and bounty, hath provided a wife, able and tender hearted Physician for us the Lord Jesus Christ, who hath prepared a rich Medicine every way suitable to our Diseases of his own most precious Blood; and he is daily begging for Patients, and his great Complaint is, that Men will not  
come

come to him, who would assuredly and freely heal them, but rather choose Death; now O that you and I may see more of our need of him; our Souls are really, O that they were more sensibly Sick, our Diseases are in their own Nature mortal ones, and all others besides him are Physicians of no value; but if he undertake our Cure the danger is over, no fear of miscarrying under his Hands; O that now we may be so thoroughly convinced of our need of him, and of his ability, skill and good will, that we may now look after him indeed, and no more neglect him as we have done, but may sincerely, heartily, chearfully and thankfully accept him, and fiducially put our lives, our souls, our all into his Hands, confiding in him, and in him alone, and obedientially following his Prescriptions, then our Souls should live and not die; but I must take leave; let me hear how it is with you: You have a daily remembrance in my poor Prayers,

*who am affectionately Yours, I. B.*

# LETTER XXIV.

To S. M.

Dear S.

I Receiv'd your's which I took very kindly; I had thoughts of writing to you before I received it, for I shall be glad of intercourse this way, and desire it may be so managed, as that it may prove to the great Advantage of us both; we should ever act like Persons for another World, and should endeavour to manage

M

every

every thing so, as may help our selves and others forward in our way to Heaven, O that we may ; I have two things to advise you to , and let my Counsel be acceptable ; The *First* is, highly esteem , and accordingly improve your precious Time ; surely if we did but consider how much great and necessary Work lies upon our hands, we could not so lightly esteem and squander away that short and precious Time allotted to us for the doing of it in ; we have much to do for God to promote his Honour and Glory ; much to do for our Selves, for our Souls ; we have our Salvation to work out, an Interest in Christ to secure and clear , weak Graces to strengthen , strong Corruptions to subdue, many and strong Temptations to resist and overcome, many hard and difficult Duties to discharge , and we must expect that the task of Duties ( though in another Sense we should not look upon Duty as a task ) will be encreasing as we grow up ; and much we have to do for others to promote their good : We have our Generation to serve in the places God sets us in, and all this must be done in time, and is not that Time to be accounted Precious ? And farther, it may be much shorter then we think of ; what is Man's life taken at its full length ? It is but as a Span ; days and years pass away like the Wind, are spent as a Tale that is told ; but let not you and I promise our selves long Life , but be thinking of a shorter cut then ordinary to the Grave ; I question not but Death is tripping up the Heels of some young Persons about you in D. as well as here ; let us take warning by them, and learn to prize and improve our precious Time ; I could wish you knew  
what



what sad Reflections I have upon my self for the mispent of time, that I should have lived so long to so little Purpose: Now dear S. you have several of those years before your Face (if the Lord lengthen out your Life) which alafs are got behind my back, and cannot be recalled; O lay hold on this advantage, and cut off the occasion of such sad Reflections now in time: My *Second* advice is, That you would keep up a constant Course of religious Duties, and labour in them for sweet and sensible Communion with God, I have suffered much by my neglect of Duties and by trifling in them; O the long and sad interruptions of my Communion with God! O the sad effects of this! Methinks sloath, idleness and formality hath even cloathed my poor Soul with raggs; Take heed S. take heed: It can never be well with us when we are strange with God, and live at a distance from him. To live without God in the World is an Hell upon Earth; O keep your Heart close to God in a course of Holy Duties; be oft in God's walks, and be not contented unless you meet with him there; but alafs while I am writing this, methinks Conscience is whispering, thou dost not follow this advice thy self as thou shouldst; I must confess this is a Truth, and a sad one, but I think it is good Advice, and I would fain have it better with me then it hath been in these respects, or then it may at present be with me, and besides I would have you better, much better then my self, therefore take and follow it; my daily Prayers are for you; the Lord be your God and Guide, and everlasting Portion!

*I am affectionately Your's, I. B.*

M 2

LET.

## LETTER XXV.

To T. W.

*My dear Friend,*

**M**ETHINKS its long since I saw you, and I cannot be quiet till I have imparted some of my Thoughts to you; I doubt not but you have been wrestling with God for us in reference to our late Exercise; methinks I feel that you and other dear Friends have been praying for us; the Lord return your kindness and your prayers into your bosom double; and may these lines farther engage them, and also put a note of praise into your lips; *O love the Lord, O praise the Lord for his goodness!* We can do little, help us, help us; add your instrument, say his goodness endureth for ever; surely he hath not contended with his great Power, nor withdrawn his supporting Arm; we have been afflicted, but he hath been with us in six Troubles and in seven he hath not forsaken us; surely all his Paths are Mercy and Truth; are not all things our's, if we be Christ's? Shall not, nay is not this already working for our good? Faith should, and Heaven will make us see and say, that God hath done all things well, even just as we would have them; trust his God; let your dependance be upon him, we have tried him, and have found him very Faithful, yea, very Gracious and Merciful: *Blessed be the God of Patience, the God of Meekness, the God of all Grace and the God of all Comforts*; for what of these he hath given in  
at

at this needful time ; help us to make his praise Glorious ; and continue instant in Prayer for us, that we may reap some special Benefit, and that our Fruit may remain : My dear Father, besides his wonderful inward Supports and Joys, hath had a greater freedom from his bodily Distempers at this time, then he hath had for some years past ; bless God for that too ; I cannot tell you all, his Mercies have been manifold, have we not been full of his Goodness ! O may our hearts, our lips, our lives be full of his Praise ! Now what shall we render ? What projects for Jesus Christ now ? I will tell you of one when I see you, which I would have your Assistance in ; think on me as to that great Affair of mine you know of ; I do not see but that Providence still smiles upon it, and am apt to think it may not be long before it be put to an issue ; I am oft full of discouraging Fears about it, pray for me ; and if providence do not yet cross it, help me to call our great Friend to the Marriage, him that turned their Water into Wine ; O, a good guest would he be ! A guest did I say, nay let him be an inhabitant ; pray him, entreat him, beseech him, tell him I do not Complement with him : But I forgot my self, the Lord fill your Soul full of his Goodness, and bless you in all your Ways :

*I am your real affectionate Friend, I. B.*

## LETTER XXVI.

*To my M.**Dear M.*

I Have been deeply concerned for you for some time of late, upon the account of that excessive trouble and sadness of Spirit, which hath so sorely born you down of late; and as it is my Duty, so it would be greatly delightful to me, could I but do any thing to help you against that, which as it cannot but be displeasing unto God, so also very Afflictive to your self, and to all that love and tender you; I was last week casting in my Thoughts for some Cordial for you, and I hope the good Providence of God hath directed me to that, which I have here sent you enclosed; the God of all comfort, bless and make it Effectual; it is that which I have sometimes found a wonderful Virtue in my self, and therefore I can the better recommend it to you; will you promise me to read it over, and not only now when you first receive it, but whenever you find a fainting fit of Sorrow coming upon you? Will you promise me to read it seriously and believingly? Why then I dare give you leave to be sad, and disconsolate if you can; O that I knew but what argument to use with you or with God for you (for you are never out of my praying Thoughts,) I dare not be unfaithful to you; I must tell you plainly there is more Sin in it than you are aware of, and it is the cause of much Sin; I know it by too sad experience my self, when

when I have sometimes been in your Case, though then I could not see it, alas things were hidden from me; *Again*, your Sorrow makes the Devil Merry, O it pleaseth him; he knows he cannot hurt you hereafter, it will be out of his Hands, therefore he takes delight in your disquiet here; and I tell you (mark it, for its that I have experienced) every time you indulge your self in it, will he get the stronger hank upon you, which you will be less able to shake off: Herein you are very ingenious to your self; you know not what inward Peace it deprives you of; it quenches the Spirit; then it greatly injures you as to your outward Man; and it is very Afflictive to all that love you; as for my own part, it clouds and dasheth all my outward Comfort when ever I think of you, and the Lord knows that is not seldom; and my poor *F.* is declining fast, and your cheariness I am well satisfied, would be better to him then any Physick: Well dear *M.* I am daily pleading with *G.* for you, as I have now been pleading with you; I shall now wait for my Answer from you both; may it be a comfortable one? May it, I then promise to bless *G.* for it, more then I ever did, for any outward Mercy he ever gave me in all my Life; I am concerned for my poor *S.* that she hath learnt to bear her Trials no better; alas, we must learn to stoop and hold our Tongues, the Lord will have us at that, before he brings us to Heaven; I intend to let her hear from me shortly, but my Affection engaged me to deal with you first, O that it may not be in vain! I would fain take fast hold on you both, and engage him to drive the nail home; carry it like a Christi-



an that hath already a Christ in possession, and an Heaven in hope ; the God of all grace and comfort , revive and chear you dear *M.* what I have written comes from the tender Affection of

*your loving obedient S. I. B.*

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LETTER XXVII.

*To my M.*

*Dear M.*

**I** Was much concerned to see you so low when you was here in Town ; I earnestly beg the Lord would make your burthen lighter, and in the mean time encrease your Strength to bear it ; and it would much rejoyce my Heart could I do any thing to help you either of these Ways ; your Exercises are many and great, and you are one of a sorrowful Spirit, whereby all your other burthens fasten themselves the more and deeper upon you ; I can say something to your Case from my own Experience, being many times much troubled with the same Distemper ; I will therefore tell you how I find it with my self, and what course I have found most helpful to me ; I have my exercises many ways both inward and outward, and such as are no small ones, and when a melancholy Fit takes me, I am many times ready quite to sink under them, and can do little else but aggravate my Troubles, and make every little thing great, and inwardly lash and torment my self not only with what I at present feel, but also with future fears, being ready to conclude

clude it will never be better, but worse and worse with me, a thousand sad perplexing Thoughts crowd into my Mind; and I please my self in this tormenting of my self, though when the fit is over I cannot but condemn my self for it; yet while under it, I really think I cannot do otherwise, nay, that I do well in it; and then sometimes I can neither read nor hear any thing, but I must meditate Terror from it, and make nothing of bearing false witness against my self, every thing must go against me be it right or wrong; at other times the best Friends I have can scarce say or do any thing to please me, but I can find something to disquiet both my self and them, sometimes I have gone alone to think it out, but I find there is no end of that; but now I will tell you of two things wherein I have found the most Relief; the one is secret Prayer; when I find one of these Fits is creeping on me, when I find my self pinched or burthened one way or other, I then take the first opportunity I can possibly get to go alone, and there to give my Heart free vent, endeavouring to turn my Trouble into a right Channel, confessing and bewailing my Sins, and while I am thus endeavouring to lay this load on, my other burthens are removed before I am aware, and moreover its ten to one the Lord removes that burthen too before I have done; believe me, I have sometimes gone to that Duty with as heavy an Heart as I think any poor Creature ever had, and have come away with it as light as though I had been in a corner of Heaven; I do not say this, as though I thought you a stranger to this sweet remedy, but to put you in mind to take it seasonably; do  
not

not defer it to your wonted times of Prayer, but take the very first opportunity that you can ; sometimes when I have thus deferred, my Heart hath been so strangely bound up, that I could scarce pray at all ; be sure to observe this, to take the remedy in time before the Distemper hath got too much hold ; I believe this which follows is a very needful piece of Advice to you (because I know you have used much to neglect your self, and I am afraid you do so still, whereby you injure your self both Soul and Body more then you are aware ) ; in this case use these Creature comforts and supports the Lord affords you, not only as a thing Lawful but as your Duty ; You assuredly Sin if you do not ; I dare say it is the Lord's mind, that you should not deny your self any thing that might make you more chearful in his Service, and he hath so provided in his Providence, that you need not want any thing that tends to the support or comfort of your Life , and then how dare you deny your self ? Dear M. I write not these things at random, for I know much of your Case by my own, and having tried these things I recommend them to you ; now let my Counsel be acceptable to you , and that the Lord would make it effectual , my earnest Prayers shall follow these poor Lines, and if I might understand they are of Advantage to you, it would very much rejoyce my Heart even mine,

*who am Your's, I. B.*

LETTER

LETTER XXVIII.

To C. W. upon the Death of his Child, Sept. 13.  
1693.

*My dear F.*

**I** Now understand our gracious G. hath been pleased to remove your Babe, to take away that part of the delight of your Eye with a stroke; I would endeavour to bear a part with you, and I think my self obliged by that bond you know of (though as I may say yet unscalded) to attempt to administer some relief to you under your present Pressures as the Lord shall enable me, for some reasons I do it this way, and the Lord give my Pen good speed: Methinks I hear you thus bespeaking me [*have pity upon me, have pity upon me O my Friend, for the hand of God hath touched me:*] Well, I would direct your Thoughts to that Scripture, 2 Sam. 12. 19, 20, 21, 22, 23. and the Lord help you to take out the Copy that is there set before you; an intire, humble and chearful Submission and self Resignation to the good Pleasure of God, is certainly our Duty even when we are under his saddest Dispensations; this he stands upon, and there is the greatest Reason in the world he should; and now my Friend to further you herein, I would have you let your Thoughts be frequently working upon such Truths as these; the Lord hath a most supream, unquestionable and manifold Right and Propriety in us, and in all that we call our's, and so this little Babe it was not so much  
yours

yours as his ; his it was by the right of Creation, Redemption, and by your own free and voluntary Dedication ; and now may not the Lord do what he will with his own ? *the Lord is righteous in all his ways ; Righteousness and Judgment are the habitation of his throne even when clouds and darkness are round about him ;* however, at any time he doth Afflict, he never doth, or can wrong us ; *the Lord is a God of Judgment, and doth every thing wisely, both as to what he doth, and as to the time, way and manner of his doing it ;* Our God is love, that is his Name, that is his Nature, and however his Dispensations towards His may alter sometimes, yet he changeth not ; He doth dearly love his Children even when he lasheth and strikes them, as well as when he strokes and takes them into his Lap ; The Lord sees that Afflictions are needful for us here ; we cannot but acknowledge that, yes, but we would choose our own Crosses ; No, no we are Fools in that, for he knows better then we what Vein to strike ; the Lord is gracious in mitigating our Affliction ; He is a most merciful Physician, and will not over dose his poor Patients ; think with your self though the Branch be smitten the Root is yet spared ; this and all other Afflictions come within the compals of that sweet comprehensive Promise [ all things shall work together for Good, ] consider the Lord is in himself and all-sufficient Good, and will be so for ever to all his chosen ones ; He is better then ten Children, yea then ten Worlds, did I say Ten, yea then ten Thousand ; come my Friend, let the Lord see, and let the World see it too, that we have learnt to make a Portion



tion of him: These and such like Considerations, you would do well to work upon your Heart; I will add but a few Words more; you have good ground to be satisfied as to the Condition of your Child, that it is safely lodged in that blessed Bosome where I trust we desire and hope to be shortly our selves; what sweetness may you fetch out of that Root of Promises [ *I will be thy God and the God of thy seed:* ] And what Marrow and Fatness in that [ although my House be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things and sure, which is all my Salvation and all my Desire, although he make it ( that is my House ) not to grow: ] As concerning your little Babe I do believe it, that it now knows more of the great Mysteries of Salvation then all the great Doctors in the World; and I do believe it now enjoyes more of God in one Minute, then you and I have done since we were born; O my Friend; now you have an opportunity for laying in for your future Comfort; a right carriage under this Affliction, how pleasing and refreshing it would be to you hereafter in the review; I have but a word or two more by way of Caution, and I will take leave: Take heed ( my Friend ) you do not listen to the Tempter, if he should attempt to bely and slander our good G. to you, we are not ignorant of his Devises, of which this is usually one in a time of Affliction; is this the G. that loves thee? Is this the G. that heareth Prayer? O beware of him! We would not the Lord should believe him when he falsely accuseth us, and why should we believe him when he dealeth thus with God? O endeavour

to keep up good Thoughts of God! Lord, do this, do that, do what thou wilt with me, I am resolved to Love thee still! And then take heed you be not too bold in giving way to your Affections, and imposing upon your Affliction, in doing any thing that may give your Passions an advantage to get above you; I durst not venture my self so far as to see my Sisters when they were Dead; those that know their own weakness should be wary; but its time I should think of a Conclusion; the time is short, we should therefore rejoyce as though we rejoyced not, and weep as though we wept not; O how soon it will be said of you and me, they are gone? Hold out Faith and Patience, we have not long to suffer; Death will perfectly kill Sin, and then farewell to all Sorrow for ever; be patient therefore ( my Friend, ) *for the coming of the Lord draws nigh*; methinks he standeth at the Door; comfort thy self with these Words; I have much ado to break off, though I confess I have been tedious, but you will pardon it as an Errour of Love; the good Lord be your support and stay! On him be sure you lean and rest:

*I am your sympathizing Friend, I. B.*

LETTER

LETTER XXIX.

To Mr. S. of H. upon the Death of Mr. C. in Recommendation of Mr. B. January 12. 1691.

SIR,

I Receiv'd your's, wherein you Advertise me of the Death of that worthy useful Person Mr. C. the reading of which struck to my Heart; I would be concerned for you, as now a Flock without a Shepherd, but the loss of such Men hath a further reach with it then to their private Families and Congregations even to the whole Church; the good Lord, as he taketh up our old Prophets, raise us up young Ones in their Room with a double portion of the Spirit of our old *Elijah*! And as to you, I heartily wish that he who is the God of the Spirits of all Flesh, would find you out a Man that may fill up the Breach which by his late sad Providence he hath made amongst you; I must acknowledge my self very unworthy and unfit to Advise you herein, and therefore need to Apology for my self in my present undertaking, and I both desire and hope you will put a favourable Construction upon it, if herein I give my Opinion; and truly I could not be easy in my Mind till I had acquainted you, that a worthy Friend of mine Mr. B. a Person of my intimate Acquaintance, one for whom I have (and that deservedly) a high Respect, one whose Ministerial gifts, graces and experiences I look upon as Extraordinary, will be at Liberty at L. day next; He is a Man of Peace, and would

would be for carrying on a healing Work among you; And truly if you be not provided, or have not your Eye upon some other Person, I am apt to think he may be very fit to undertake the Charge of you, and would be likely to be a blessed Instrument among you; I confess little stress is to be laid upon my Judgment, but I heartily wish you would mean to consult some that know him, and are able to advise you; and if upon Consultation and Advice you should have any inclination this way, if you give me but a Line, I know at my request he will not engage himself any where (as I am satisfied at present he is not) till he hears further from me; the Lord direct your Choice! And if I can any way serve you, you may freely Command me, for there is no Work in this World so pleasing to me as that, wherein (in my place) I may be most serviceable to God and Souls; if you should be engaged, or should dislike the Motion, or think others would not approve of it, then keep this to your self, only give me a Line as soon as conveniently you can for my own Satisfaction: My hearty Respects and Service to your whole Self and other Friends, concludes this from

Sir,

*Your affectionate Friend*

*and Servant, I. B.*

LETTER

LETTER XXX.

To Mr. F. about Midleton Business, October, 18.  
1695.

*Reverend and much Honoured Sir,*

I Was favoured with your's above a Month since, wherein you was pleased to give me your Thoughts about a meeting they are now setting on foot at *Midleton*; I. R. acquainted me with their Circumstances, and desired me to do what I could for them; and truly the Account he gave me of the want of Means in those Parts, and withal of the Willingness of the poor People to attend upon them as they have opportunity, this made me look upon it as a very promising Project, in which I was more confirmed by the Account I had in yours, as also in one I had to the same Purpose from good Mr. *Bagshaw*; I was glad of them upon my own Account, but chiefly as I doubted not, but they would facillitate my effecting of the Business; it rejoyced me to think that the Lord should please in his Providence to cut out such a piece of Work as this for such an unworthy one as I, and to my further great Joy, he hath been with me in it to the effecting of it, and that with a great deal of ease; I have procured amongst my Friends an allowance for them, to enable them to have a Minister once a Fortnight, for the space of three Years, in which time I hope (if it please the Lord to  
N give



give Succesſ) they may be in a better capacity to ſend for themſelves; I wait over this Week to acquaint them with it, and to ſettle the Buſineſs; I have been a little thoughtful how they would get a ſupply of Miniſters, eſpecially of ſuch as are right Men for them, but was more at eaſe when I heard by Mr. P. that they were in hopes of pritty much of your help; dear Sir, do what you can for them your Self, and alſo direct them to ſuch as you think fitteſt for them, and the Lord give you abundant Succesſ! And truly I am upon ſeveral Accounts encouraged to hope that the Lord hath a conſiderable Harveſt of Souls, which he is now about to gather in that poor Place; I thought it might be of great uſe if they had ſome *Catechiſms* and other good Books diſperſed among them, and accordingly I have procured ſomething to be diſpoſed of that way; I have already ſent for two hundred *Catechiſms*, and intend them ſome of Mr. *Jo. Alleins* Books of *Conversion*, and if you ſhould think of any other little thing which would be likely to do good amongſt them, I beg a few Lines from you at your firſt Leiſure; I do not queſtion but you will take occaſion in your Sermons, to preſs them to make a diligent good Uſe of the ſame, and I wiſh you would pleaſe to direct the good Men about the diſperſing of them when they come to their Hands, which ſhall be with all the Expedition that may be, as ſoon as your Answer hath determined my Thoughts either to that good Book of Mr. *Alleins* alone, or to ſome other good thing with it: The Sum I have to beſtow that way is about 4*l.* 10*s.* Pardon my boldneſs in giving you this Trouble, and let me

me have an Interest in your Prayers, who am  
alafs! An unworthy, unprofitable; good for  
nothing,

*Joseph Barrett.*

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LETTER XXXI.

*To Mr. W. in order to the engaging a weekly  
Hour of Prayer for the Publick, December 2.  
1695.*

*Reverend and dear Sir,*

**I**T hath been much and oft upon my Spirit  
of late, to attempt your engaging of one  
Hours extraordinary Prayer every Week upon  
the account of the Publick, and particularly  
for this present Parliament during their Session;  
methinks there are more then a few things  
which loudly bespeak, and will sufficiently  
warrant such an Undertaking; if I should go  
about to mention them to you it would shew  
my weakness, if not something worse, and  
therefore I forbear; only one thing give me  
leave humbly to mention in relation to my  
Self, which hath the rather put me upon it;  
methinks I have several times found my Heart  
more excited, encouraged to, and drawn out  
in Prayer for this, then for any Parliament of  
late I know, alafs, I can do very little my Self,  
if in this matter I be not as a Bone out of joint;  
a thing I many times fear; but if a considera-  
ble Number of such were engaged who can  
wrestle with G. who knows what the Issue may  
be; however, this can be no Enemy to Holi-  
ness

nels in our Hearts and Lives; as to Circumstances, I should think it would be best to have a set Hour appointed, for as many as can, though all cannot precisely observe it; what if it be every *Monday Morning*,

\* *It was upon advice fixed for Tuesday Morning, principally with respect to Parishoners, who either better on Monday Morning, or some of them being engaged at Work abroad, might be from home on that Morning, and so not so free from that Work as on other Mornings in the Weeks when at their own homes.*

\* and to be spent by Persons apart in their Closets, unless where there is a conveniency of uniting? But excuse my boldness in mentioning these things, for all Circumstances, and the thing it Self, I wholly leave to the Determination of your much better Judgments: If you should approve of it, and should think a private way of engaging Persons to it most Prudent, and have not a fitter Person ready, I should be glad to take any pains to set the Matter on foot; I do not question, but you will take the Matter into your Thoughts, so as that if you approve it, another Week may not be lost: And if I have your Encouragement, I would make use of the little acquaintance and interest I have in several other Congregations both nearer and more remote, speedily to engage them in the like course; I look upon my Self as more engaged then others to promote such Work, because I know I can do so little my Self; I beg a particular remembrance in your Prayers, who alas! am a very poor, sinful, useles, good for nothing, and so very needy though unworthy:

Dear Sir, I am very affectionately Your's, I. B.

LETTER

LETTER XXXII.

To I. R. Elton, *about Midleton's business and praying Project*, December, 5. 1695.

Dear Friend,

I Have now sent you a hundred *Catechisms*, the Lord grant they may be of good Use to many Souls! I would not have you give them away all at once, hand over head, but as prudently as you can, not to such where you can have no rational hope, but that they will be quite thrown away; and where you do bestow them, I desire you would give some good Advice both to Parents and Children, and follow it with your Prayers; and as you have opportunity, be enquiring whether they make any use of them or no, and accordingly in the Spirit of Love and Meekness, either reprove, exhort or encourage as there is occasion, and the Lord crown your endeavours that way with Success; I received a Letter from the Reverend Mr. F. wherein he advised that the School Dame should be encouraged by some quarterly Pension, to teach her Scholars the *Catechisms*, and that some poor Children be put to School. I much approve his Advice, and gave G. thanks for it; if you have seen him since, I question not but he hath acquainted you with my Desire, that you would seasonably and prudently go about it; the whole business is much upon my Heart, having a longing desire after the Salvation of your poor Country Men's Souls; I should be glad to hear from you sometimes how

things go on ; and I would fain know which is your Fortnight-day , that I might more particularly remember you then, and the good Lord give us in some early and evident Token of his gracious Acceptance of us in this thing, in revealing his Arm in his Word and Ordinances, he is now pleased to send amongst you, I have not time to add more now, but intend to write to you again shortly : Let me hear from you ; give my hearty Love to good Mr. P. and accept the same your Self,

*I am your affectionate Friend, I. B.*

If the School Dame will undertake it, let all Her Scholars have *Catechisms* given them. It hath pleased the Lord to put it into the Hearts of our Ministers , and of a great Number of serious praying Persons among us, to spend one Hour weekly apart in our Closets in earnest Prayer to G. for the Publick, and particularly for this present Parliament, which G. enabling us, we intend to continue during their present Sessions ; the time is *Tuesday* Morning Seven a Clock : As you meet with any serious Christians, endeavour to engage them to the same Course, and send away your enclosed to Mr. B. as speedily as possibly you can, which goes upon the same Errand.

LETTER



LETTER XXXIII.

To Mr. B. at Ford, about the praying Project,  
December, 5. 1695.

*Reverend and dear Sir,*

**I**T hath pleased the Lord to put it into the Hearts of our Ministers, and of a great Number of serious and praying Persons in this Place, to set apart one Hour every Week, wherein, in an humble wrestling Manner to seek the Lord, as for his Church in general, and especially amongst us in these poor sinful Lands, so particularly for this present Parliament, which we intend to continue ( the Lord enabling us ) during their present Session ; we think there are many things which loudly bespeak and will sufficiently warrant such an Undertaking as this, but if I should go about to mention them to you, it would shew my Weakness if not something worse, therefore I forbear ; I shall only in a few Words acquaint you first with our purpose and resolution as to our Practice ( which I have indeed in part done already ) and then with our humble Request unto you ; as to our own Resolution ( which we shall, the Lord enabling us forthwith the ensuing Week put in Practice, and continue during this present Session of Parliament ) it is to spend one Hour every *Tuesday* Morning (beginning at Seven a Clock as near as we can ) each of us apart in our Closets, in earnest wrestling with the Lord, for his poor Church, and particularly for this present Parlia-

ment; O that they may be a band of Men whose Hearts the Lord hath touched! O that he would make them reformers and healers to us! And now our humble and earnest Request unto you is, that you would put to your helping Hand, and that you would speedily endeavour (in such a way as your Prudence shall direct) to engage as many of your serious praying People as possibly you can, to set upon the same Work; we thought it most Prudent to engage Persons by speaking to them privately and particularly, but that and other Circumstances we leave to your prudent Management: Only dear Sir, let us stir up our selves and one another, and once more see what Prayer will do! And we do further Request, that you will use your Interest in other Ministers that are near you, but out of our reach, to engage them and their several Congregations in the same Work, and also to use their Interest to engage others; and when you have an opportunity, I should be extream glad to hear in a few Lines what is done in this Affair amongst you; I have divers others to write unto upon the same Account so must take leave beging a particular Remembrance of you in your Prayers, who am one extream needy, though very unworthy of the same; I am dear Sir,

*Very affectionately Yours, I. B.*

LETTER

## LETTER XXXIV.

To dear H. London, about the praying Project,  
January, 18. 1665.

Dear and much Honoured Sir,

UPON the receipt of a considerable spiritual Mercy the latter end of *November* last, as I was projecting what return to make, it pleased the Lord to direct my Thoughts and strenuously to encline them to this, *Scil.* to attempt the engaging of a weekly Hour of Prayer, by Persons apart in their Closets, as for the universal Church of God, and especially that part of it amongst us in these poor sinful Lands, so particularly for this present Parliament; and he hath been pleased to succeed my poor Endeavours herein, to the actual engaging of a great Number of excellent pious praying Ministers and private Christians, as in this, so likewise in divers neighbouring Countries, as *Darbyshire, Leicestershire, Yorkshire, Cheshire and Lancashire*; my poor Thoughts have again and again been looking towards *London*; where I know there are vast Numbers of such as are Princes upon their Knees, but have had those discouragements arising in, and from my Self, as have hitherto laid an embargo upon my Pen; indeed I was ready all along to fear (as I had just Reason,) that this Religious project would (if it took in the main, yet) suffer much damage by its passing through my sorry Hands; but meeting with unexpected Success to my very great surprizing Joy, I am now encouraged  
to

to hoist the Sails and make this further and higher Adventure (O that it may be as prosperous, yea more abundantly so!) And I am the more encouraged, because I have your dear Self, whose prudence, zeal and interest in the Hearts of others, I have such a full satisfaction of to apply my self unto: And now dear Sir, my humble and earnest Request is, That you will be please to take the first convenient Opportunity you have, to acquaint some of your Pious, publick spirited Ministers with it, such as have the greatest Interest in, and Influence upon others, and endeavour to engage them to the like Undertaking, and to use their utmost Endeavour to engage the rest of their reverend Brethren in and about the City, and each of them (in such a way as their Prudence shall direct) to engage as many of their serious praying People as possibly they can, that (as there is great need) there may be a confederate humble violence used, and as general an attack as may be made upon the Gates of Heaven; Our time is *Tuesday* Morning Seven a Clock as near as we can: Your Circumstances in the City may much differ from our's in the Country, and however I will not presume to hint any thing by way of direction here, but give me leave to renew my humble earnest Request, that you would be please to Concur with us in the Thing, and then whether you shall please to take the Field before upon that, or on the preceding Day, or whether you please to follow after with your Recruits to make a fresh and more vigorous Attack, if we have you but for our Confederates, we still have our wish; indeed at first for some Reasons, I thought it best to

to engage Persons to continue this Course out only during this present Session of Parliament, though I then had it in my Eye, and seasonably shall (the Lord permitting and enabling me) actually endeavour the continuance of it longer; in short *Sir*, either till Mercy comes, or a prohibition of Prayer (the latter of which the Lord grant never may! If it doth, then farewell all;) Methinks there is no way like it; but if it shall please the Lord further to smile upon me in inclining your Heart to undertake, and in succeeding you herein, you shall hear more of that; methinks there are many things which loudly bespeak, and will sufficiently warrant such an Undertaking; our own Case as well as that of other poor Churches is very pressing; verily *Sir*, our ordinary way of Praying will not do, will not pass now; O that we could in good earnest fall to wrestling! Alas *Sir*, how the Credit of Prayer is fallen in the World of late! Our Enemies do not fear Prayers as they have done; and truly if my poor sad Case be that of others of God's People, I am afraid the reason is, that neither our Graces nor our Lusts seek our Prayers as they should do, if they did, our Enemies would soon be taught to fear Prayer again; let us therefore stir up our selves and one another, and once more see what Prayer will do; would it but please the Lord to raise the old Spirit of Prayers in the Hearts of his People, and enable them rightly to follow their Prayers in their Lives, might we not look upon this as a comfortable Presage of some notable Appearance of his, for his Interest amongst us! The holy fervent Prayers of his People formerly used to  
pass



current with him for a whole Kingdom ; sure we are reduced to sore Extremities indeed , if our Prayers be so clipt ( as our Coin ) that the praying Soul can now only save One ; but if I should go about to use any Arguments with you in such a business as this , I should herein forget my self , for I question not , but you are , and will be more ready ( then poor unworthy I ) of you own accord ; if any thing of this Nature be done amongst you , then take no notice of this poor Scrible ; if not , I doubt not but you will speedily and vigorously set your Self to the promoting of it , and the Lord be with you to direct , assist and succeed you ! If you will please to conceal my Name in this Business ( which can give no advantage to it ) you will oblige me ; I shall impatiently long for a few Lines from you about it , and surely good News would be to my Soul as cold Water to the Thirsty ? But I have been over tedious and troublesome , and may well reckon , that before this I have tired your Patience , and so must think of a close ; I earnestly beg a particular Remembrance in your Prayers , who alas am still a poor sinful , needy , unworthy , useless , good for nothing ; My humble Service to your good Lady :

*I am dear Sir,*

*your very affectionate, humble*

*and much obliged Servant*

Jo. Barrett.

L E T.

LETTER XXXV.

*To Dr. London, about the praying Project,  
February, 26. 1695.*

*Dear and much honoured Sir,*

**Y**OUR'S I receiv'd, which upon a double Account was very welcome to me; blessed be G. since my last, there is a comfortable change in my Father ( who presents his Service and Thanks to you ) the last Lord's day he was enabled for his Work here amongst us ! I rejoyce in your ready compliance with my former request, which indeed I did not doubt of; what need there is of that Duty ? O how soon may we have a loud providential Call to it ! My Heart oft trembles within me, I cannot, I cannot but meditate Terrour, when I seriously think of poor *England's* Case ; is not the Lord very angry with us ? Is he not e'en wary with forbearing ? Is not wrath e'en ready to fall ? I should be glad if I was alone in these Apprehensions, or, if I durst look upon them in my self and others, as the meer products of a melancholly Phancy ; but alas its otherwise, therefore [*let us Pray*] dear Sir, speed the thing all you can ; O how soon it may ( in some respects ) be too late ! I hope some of us fin'd since this was set on foot amongst us, some reviving of a Spirit of Prayer, but our fears of impending Judgments not abated; but however, will it not be good for us that we be found preparing to meet our G. in the way of his Judgments, and framing to put our selves  
into

into the Gap? Will not this be more comfortable, then to be found among those who are still further making a way unto his Anger? Since my last, I found amongst my Papers the *Cities call to Prayer* in 1693; would not something of that Nature be highly seasonable now? But with humble Submission I think and earnestly desire, that no time be limited for the Contrivance of it; let us Pray and not faint; let us hold on until *Salvation unto our God* be our Song: But there should be some alteration of the Hour in Summer; what if it be from six to seven in Summer, and from seven to eight in Winter; *Monday Morning*, doth not so well sute us here in the Country, because many of our Ministers are forced to travel abroad to their Labours, and cannot be so free as at home; but pardon my boldness in hinting at these things; I leave it to your Prudence whether you will mention them or no; but dear Sir, speed the Business all you can; I am the rather urgent with you here, because I have engaged my Friends only during this present Session of Parliament, which I presume is not likely to be long, and methinks I would not have one praying Hour intermitted, and yet I am loath my Pen should go the round a second time before I have something from you; I beg you would be urgent with your worthy Ministers for a second Call to the whole Kingdom, which I shall impatiently long for, not to ease my Pains, but to do the Work much more universally and effectually; and to encourage them to it, let them know that the Iron is now hot with many of us; by the experiments I have made, I find a great readiness of Mind to the  
Duty,

Duty, and dare almost promise them a general universal Correspondence with the thing, by those whose Prayers are likely to stand poor *England* in any stead at this dark and trembling Point of Time, though it cannot be expected that all should fall in exactly with every Circumstance; the good Lord give them an oneness of Heart in this Affair, and the whole Nation in complying with them! If the Lord should encline their Hearts to do any thing this way, I shall hope for some Copies; I shall think the time long till I hear from you; but I know not when to end; its well I have a Man of Patience to deal with:

*I am dear Sir,*

*your very affectionate, humble*

*and much obliged Servant*

Jo. Barrett.

LETTER XXXVI.

*To Mr. L. May, 25. 1696.*

*SIR,*

I Cannot but eagerly take hold of the first Opportunity to let you know, how well I was pleased with the short hint you gave me in the close of your last; the Lord help me to do it so as may be to your eternal Advantage! Since you took the little good Advice I gave you, so well I am encouraged thereby to tell you more of my Heart. I do not dissemble with

with you in telling you that you have a great share of my Affections; if you was my own Brother, I think I could not love you better; and I am well satisfied that (as we use to say) there is no love lost between us, that you bear the like Affection unto me; now I would endeavour to make the best improvement of the Interest I have in you, and surely that cannot be better done, then by doing my utmost to intitle my great Master a dear and lovely Jesus to it; I do heartily rejoyce in your outward prosperity, but more earnestly desire the Prosperity of your Soul, and should exceedingly rejoyce, might I any way be an instrument in promoting it; the thing I aim at, is not so much the proselyting you, the bringing you over to my way and party, but the engaging you in a course of serious Godliness; though as I have found G. in the way that I am in, I dare not forsake it my self so far as I am satisfied it is according to his Word, yet I am far from thinking that Religion lies in Notions and Opinions, and I doubt not but that there are many serious Christians that differ from me in their Opinions about lesser Matters; but this, all serious Christians in the World are agreed in that, without conversion, regeneration, true repentance, faith and real holiness, both of Heart and Life, there is no hopes of Salvation. Now this is the Business you and I must look after, to see that we have past the new birth, are thoroughly changed from what we were by Nature; and truly Grace makes a mighty great Change where it comes; it is a thing above Morality, common Civility, above a formal Profession, above outward Attendance or Or-  
dinances;



dinances, above the common Works of the Spirit in the Hearts of Men; it is an inward deep, powerful abiding thing: The Lord give us to experience it, in and upon our own Souls, without which, its impossible that all the Words in the World should make us rightly understand it. The poor miserable deluded World, thinks all this is meer Phancy, but assure your self its otherwise. I know you will meet with a great many Objections arising from Satan and your own Heart, as I and all others who have experience of a saving work of G. upon their Souls have done before you; He will its like endeavour to make you shy of Convictions of your sin and misery by Nature, which in some degree or other ever goes before a sound Conversion; but as you love your Soul, when ever you feel the holy Spirit of G. this way at work, do not stifle, but encourage them all you can; when you feel your self pained this way, take the first opportunity you can to retire into some private Place, and there pour out your Complaint before the Lord, acknowledge your sinfulness, lament your misery, cry to him for Mercy, cast your Soul at his Feet, and though you should not have ease and satisfaction at first, yet be not discouraged, but hold on, seek him in good earnest, and my Soul for your's he is found of you. And its like he will endeavour to prejudice you against Religion as too strict, as a morose, dull, melancholy Thing, as that which would deprive you of all the Comfort of your Life; but this is notoriously False. I would not delude you, and I do, and must seriously profess to you this, in just commendation of my dear Master and his Service, that I

am fully satisfied upon the little trial I have made, that a religious godly Life, is the most pleasant Life in all the World again; Wildoms Ways, are ways of Pleasantness, and all her paths are Peace; I have now been acquainted with Him and his Service many Years, and still the more I know of Him and his Service, the better I am pleased with both, and that upon solid substantial Grounds; really I speak my very Heart to you in these things, and nothing but what you shall certainly find your Self, if you will but come and see, if you will but make trial as I have done. Indeed Religion doth forbid all beastly Pleasures, but it doth not need them, for it brings others infinitely better in their room which are peculiar to it self, which strangers intermeddle not with; and then as to sober manlike Pleasures, its so far from depriving of them, that it gives the best right unto the sweetest Enjoyments, and the surest hold of them; And the best is still behind, even those Rivers of Joys and Pleasures at God's right Hand for ever more, where others must ly down in endless Sorrow; but I am afraid you will think me too tedious, do not take it ill from me, I verily think you will not; God is my witness, that love to my Master whom I can never admire, never commend, never save so much, or so well as he deserves I should, and love to your Soul, a longing desire, that you two may come to be savingly acquainted together hath set my Pen on work, let him give it good speed! I greatly delight in you here, but I would very fain take you along with me to Heaven; let us not part! But I dare not for a World delude and flatter you here,

here, without a sound Conversion, without true Faith in Christ and real Holiness, this can never be. I am many times praying hard for you in my Closet when you little think of it: I earnestly recommend to your serious Perusal, that little Book I left for your good Wife when I was last with you, the Lord do you much by it!

*I am dear Sir,*

*your real affectionate Friend*

*and Servant*

Jo. Barrett.

LETTER XXXVII.

*To Mr. B. London, May, 30. 1696.*

*Reverend Sir,*

**I**T pleaseth the Lord to make use of such a sorry unworthy Instrument as I, in the engaging of a great Number of Ministers, and other serious praying Persons in this and divers neighbouring Counties, to spend one Hour every Week in extraordinary seeking *L.* for his Ch. in general, and particularly for these poor sinful tottering Kingdoms, and to continue this Course during the late Sessions of Parliament, and meeting with very encouraging Success in my poor Attempts here in the Country, and withal observing again and again in my Retirements still more then ordinary impressions upon my Spirit of sore Judgments near approaching, I was thus both excited and encouraged, to

O 2

recommend

recommend the like Undertaking to a Religious Gentleman of my acquaintance in *London*, Dr. H. I wrote to him again and again about it, earnestly pressed him, if it might be to procure from you and neighbouring Ministers, a printed Call to Prayer to the whole Kingdom. I had it in my Thoughts before the foresaid time was out, to have written to my Friends here a second time to engage the Continuance of this needful Work, but was in hopes that a printed Call from you might have been procured to do the Work every way much more effectually, but I begin now to be discouraged, hearing nothing from my Friend about it; this hath occasioned my taking the boldness to trouble you with these Lines; I know your Hands are very full, yet I earnestly beg you will take the first opportunity you can to speak with the Dr. about it, to know what hath been done in it, and if nothing of this Nature may be expected, then I beg a few Lines from you as soon as possible, that private endeavours may be used; alas *Sir*, which way can one look and not see a pressing Call to this Duty? Indeed the Lord hath lately given us a great deliverance, but truly laying things together, for my part, I know not whether it hath more encreased my Hopes or Fears; such a thing rightly improv'd would have been something: But if after all God's goodness to us we continue as bad as ever, if not worse, what may we expect then? If the Lord be forced after all to strike, may we not fear the blow will fall very heavy? Indeed I fear a sore Storm is hastening upon *England*, a Land resolutely bent upon its own Ruine. Doth not the Lord expect something more then ordinary

nary from us at such a time as this? And if we generally flocked about him in good earnest, who knows but he might yet be entreated? And however though the Storm should not be prevented, yet would it not certainly be better for us, yea and for *England* too, that it find us on our Knees? Pray *Sir*, let me not be long without a few Lines from you; methinks the Business requires haſt:

*I am Sir,*

*your affectionate Friend*

*and humble Servant* I. B.

LETTER XXXVIII.

To Mr. B. London, June, 9. 1696.

*Reverend and much honoured Sir,*

**Y**OUR'S I received laſt Week very gladly notwithstanding ſome miſtake; I perceive you thought my former Letter had come from my Father; I wonder much that my weakneſs did not ſoon make you ſenſible of your miſtake, but your Charity is ſuch as made you cover it; I am not ſorry upon ſome accounts, that you did ſo miſtake, though I thought it a point of Juſtice to him, to give you this hint of it: *Sir*, I heartily rejoyce and bleſs G. for what I underſtand by your's is already done, and further intended by you in *London* in way of Prayer. If you have occaſion in a ſhort time to go near Dr. H. or elſe if you would pleaſe to ſend for him, he would fully acquaint you with my



poor Thoughts about this Affair, what hath been done by us in this part of the Country during the late Session of Parliament, and with what humble Submission I earnestly desired might further be done: In short I was thinking that if you would please to fix upon a weekly Hour of Prayer, and then send abroad if it was but one half Sheet to acquaint us with your Practice, and to excite us to fall in with it, it might do great service by the success I lately met with in these Parts, I am encouraged to hope that it would be very taking, and generally complied with, by all those whose Prayers are likely to stand poor *England* in any stead at this needful time; I remember you did something of this Nature in 93. A considerable Number of Copies were providentially sent to my Hand, which blessed be *L.* I spread with success. But methinks the time should not be prefixed in too short limits as to Continuance; and so if upon consulting with your Reverend Brethren, you should think of doing any thing of this Nature, what if you put in for the continuance of it every Campaign while the War lasts, and so as well every Session of Parliament? Or indeed, why should it not be continued without any intermission at all, even till Mercy comes, and so our Note be changed to that of Praise, only with some alteration of the Hour in Winter? Who knows what the damage may be if *Moses's* Hands fall down, though but for a while? Indeed such a thing would make the business Publick, and to many its like would be too ready to make an ill Use of it; but truly *Sir* in my Opinion, this is not a time for us to stand upon such Points; is not  
our

our warrant good, our call clear loud and pressing! And if we follow our work to purpose, we need not be ashamed to let the World know what we are about, nor need we fear but that our G. will yet again in due time own and honour Prayer, if it be but rightly managed and followed by us; but pardon my boldness in hinting at these things, and in detaining you so long; I shall thankfully receive your Notes about Prayer and help my Father to them; he lives in the Country, and though he did not know of my writing to you, yet I know his Thoughts concur with mine herein, and had he been with me now, I doubt not but he would have intimated so much with service and thanks to you;

*I am dear Sir,*

*your very affectionate*

*and obliged Servant I. B.*

LETTER XXXIX.

*To Dr. H. London, March, 14. 1691.*

*Dear and much honoured Sir,*

**B**E not angry with me that I am yet again troublefom to you; I hope you have received my last dated *February 26.* I little thought what a condition you was in in *London* when I wrote it; the News the next day's Post brought us was very surprizing to me; O how loath the Lord is to leave us! How shall I give thee up *O England?* Methinks now here is that in this late gracious providential Dispensation, which shall wonderfully facillitate your affecting that Business, I have again and again earnestly recommended to your care; methinks its a very

fruitful Call to that Duty ; how many Heads of Arguments it affordeth ? Some very encouraging, others as awakning, for (amongst other things) believe me *Sir*, if this Deliverance hath not a better effect upon us, and be not followed by us at another rate then former any have been, we may well fear to think what comes next ; we are upon our good behaviour, and who knows whether this be not the last Tryal the Lord will make ? Your Reverend Ministers (upon whom the Eye of the Nation is much fixed,) never had a fairer opportunity for a general and successful Call to Prayer ! To the whole Kingdom, which I sent my last to beg for ; we are now generally alarmed, a great number of pious Souls, that have for some Months been hard at work in seeking G. in an extraordinary Manner that way, have now I doubt not, fresh Life put into them ; but your long silence makes me fear least the Business should some way miscarry, at least that you have some unhappy rubs thrown in your way ; I beg a few lines for my satisfaction, though you cannot give me so full and good an Account as you would, and let me have a fuller one afterwards, *who am dear Sir,*  
*your obliged Servant* Jo. Barrett.

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## LETTER XL.

To Mr. L. E. June, 15. 1696.

*SIR,*

**Y**OU will understand by my former Letter that your's came safe to hand, and was to the rejoycing of my Heart ; blessed be  
 G.

G. for the great satisfaction therein given of your sense of matters of the highest Concern ; I hope the Lord hath in some measure made you sensible of the worth of your Soul, of your Sin and Danger, of your need of Christ and Grace in order to eternal Life and Glory ; and that he hath also enclined you seriously and presently without delay, to mind the things which concerns your everlasting Peace ; the good Lord keep this for ever in your imagination of the thought of your Heart ; and establish your Heart unto him. Indeed as you hint sincerity and heartiness in Religion is worth all ; and meer pretences to it how fair and specious soever, never did nor will save one Soul, but will aggravate the Condemnation of many ; when others great care is to seem better then they are, the Lord help us that our's may be to be better then we seem, this is right in the sight of the Lord ! O that I could find more of this temper in this Soul of mine ! As to that which you hint at, which hath been a great disadvantage to you, the unsuitable Carriage of Professors. It is a common Case and a sad one ; wo to the World because of such Offences , and wo to those by whom such Offences come : It doth very much prejudice the World against serious Religion and Godliness, when they see such as are high pretenders to it, can be as loose as others ; though indeed if you observe, you will find the World watcheth such most critically to spy any thing amiss in them , and sometimes they do falsely accuse , and at other times aggravate Matters at a high rate out of an hatred (if the truth was known) of Religion and Godliness it self ; but alas its too true God knows, that

that many that are high pretenders to these, are but meer pretenders, and no wonder if these miscarry and become a reproach to Religion; and truly ( though I do not think you aimed at me in it yet ) I must acknowledge that in many things I act so unsuitably to my Profession, many times that I am e'en ashamed the World should know, who am I, for fear that blessed Name and Cause I bear and stand up for, should suffer by me; but as to this, you have prevented me in saying, that in short, that I should have done, that this should not hinder others and make them think worse of Religion, its blessed Authors ways and end, but rather quicken them the more to see to soundness at the bottom, that they take up a Profession on right Grounds, that they have a right Principle within, and make them more chearful afterwards to live up unto it, and back it with a suitable Practice: As to what you further hint about Dissenting Ministers, if you heard them but speak for themselves, you would soon understand that it was not a proud, sturdy, refractory Humour that made about two Thousand of them wise, learned and pious Persons at once quit their Places, run the hazard of Imprisonment, Banishment, and in all probability the utter undoing of themselves and families as to this World, and ( which was yet dearer to them ) deny themselves the publick Advantage they had of doing good to Souls; but the truth is, such things was imposed on them, which how indifferent and lawful soever they appeared to others, after the diligent use of the best means for Satisfaction did not appear so to them, which therefore they could not comply with,  
with.



without sinning against God, and wounding their own Consciences, which they durst not deliberately and wittingly do, tho' it had been to save the World; and their Arguments are such as their Opposers could never yet Answer satisfactorily in the Judgment of judicious impartial Men; and sober Conformists, though they are satisfied with the lawfulness of them, yet bear them as their Burthen, and some of them have pleaded the Nonconformists Cause: But as I do not much trouble my own Head, so neither would I trouble your's with matters of Controversy, though if you desire it, I will give you further satisfaction in this Point; for my own Part, I can freely join with the Church of *England* in their Worship (as our Ministers frequently do) so far as I am not obliged to join in that which I look on as a Corruption in it, and where I can see any of them that appears to be sincere, a truly God-fearing Man, I speak my Heart, that Man I can put in my bosom as well as any of my own Party; we are both agreed in the main, and I believe we shall never be all of one Mind in every Point while in this imperfect State, where we cannot assent in Judgment, let us dissent with Affection; O that there was more of this Disposition on both sides! And that we could mutually study and endeavour to outstrip one another in promoting the Common, but glorious Cause of Christ and Christianity in the World, making Religion our Business, being careful to adorn our Profession with suitable Conversations; then I doubt not but we shall all meet in the same Heaven in the end, and the glorious Light which then beams forth from the Father of Lights, will

will discover all our Mistakes and perfectly agree us : *I am your's, I. B.*

## LETTER XLI.

To Mr. F. Chesterfield, Aug. 26. 1696. *about*  
Mr. Law.

Reverend Sir,

**I** Am frequently thoughtful about that poor People of *Elton, Middleton, &c.* and having again and again of there flocking into the outward means which the Lord hath pleased now to send among them (may they indeed flock in apace to our dear Lord Jesus, ) as also of their diligent attention, and affection under them as to many of them, I have been encouraged to attempt doing something farther for them, in order to their enjoying more frequent Opportunities, which blessed be G. I have now effected; but they have been something quicker then I thought of in fixing upon one to sit down among them, a young Man that lives some where near good Mr. *Bagshaw*; I have nothing to say against their Choice, I have very little knowledge of the Person, but it being a Matter of greater Importance then its like they are aware of, I should desire a little satisfaction about him, and supposing you to have knowledge of him, I entreat the Favour of a few Lines to inform me what he is as to his Judgment and Practice, and whether you look on him as a fit Person to fix among them. I greatly desire that they may have one that is a plain warm Preacher, one sound in Judgment and of a strict and holy Life, such a one I should be

be well satisfied in, as a likely Instrument to do good among them, though he should come behind in other things. And I suppose you are well acquainted with that poor Country, and so desire you would be casting about in your thoughts, if it may be to find us out another Place where Charity of this Nature may be duly and advantagiously placed, if it may be obtained, as I have some hopeful prospect that it might, if I could but tell where to fix it, and was but enabled to give some good account of it; let your thoughts be at work for me this way (for me did I say, nay for you, and let me also say my) dear Lord and Master, and for precious Souls that are upon the point of perishing, whose Condition calls for our tenderest bowels of compassion and help, though through want of Sence they do it not for themselves. But I forget my Self in thus bespeaking you, and as to my Self, possibly may deceive you, making you think, that my Love to Christ and Souls is more then alas it is, a poor thing even next to nothing (sad, sad, this is but true) and as soon as you can fix and have an opportunity, let me hear from you; but let me have a line concerning the former Business by my Friend the Bearer hereof, for I intend (God willing) for *Elton* next Week, and then it will be expected that the business be concluded, which now blessed be G. I am prepared for in case your character of Mr. L. encourage me: I write in hast and will not detain you longer, only in begging a remembrance in your Prayers, some of my mistaken Friends that are least acquainted with me, may possibly think me some body for Religion, but alas the truth is, I make e'en nothing

thing on't! Help me who am dear Sir, your  
*very affectionate Friend and Servant, I. B.*

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### LETTER XLII.

To Mr. F. Chesterfield, September, 18. 1696.

Dear Sir,

**Y**OUR'S by good Mr. P. came safe to hand and was welcome to me, indeed I would fain be doing something and with Submission to my great Master, will have deliberately and delightfully chosen that which is more directly Charity to Souls, for my more especial Province desiring, herein to lay out and improve my poor but utmost Capacities and Interest so far as I may without breaking rank, but alas its but very little that I can do, and the best of that very poorly done, I speak my Heart, I fear you think too well of me, as to the Substance of your Letter, Sir, I have not at present in my Hands, any thing of publick Charity but what is already determined of, as to persons, places and uses, but having some of Mr. *Alleins* Books by me, I intend to send you some of them on my own account, as soon as opportunity offers, if you have an opportunity, first please to send in haste  
*I remain your affectionate Friend and Servant, I. B.*

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### LETTER XLIII.

To Mr. B. Ford, November, 12. 1696.

Reverend and dear Sir,

**I** Received your's by good Mr. A. but being surprized with his unexpectedly sudden Return

turn I had no time to Answer it. I bless the Lord who enclined and enabled you to come to us at *Middleton*, so that I have once seen your Face, and had an opportunity of joining with you in Prayer, and that in the heavenly Part of it; O how sweet will Heaven be! You are great in the Eyes of others, but little in your own; how happy are you in this, that your Face shines and you know it not! Dear *Sir*, I thank you for your Letter. My Father and I were both concerned that it fell out so, that we could not take the opportunity of getting a taste of Mr. *A.* (one in whom methinks, one may see something extraordinary even in his Countenance) one by appointment six Weeks before, coming on purpose from a great distance to preach the Lecture that Day: We got a little hold on him by promise to come again, pray *Sir*, put him in mind of it when you see him. I had great hopes concerning Mr. *L.* from the time I first see him, and heard how the People were generally affected under his Ministry, and have my hopes the more confirmed by the account you have once and again given me of him. I am sometimes in pain about them, fearing least the Adversary by stirring up a Spirit of Division among them should much hinder the Work, we are not ignorant of his Devices, the good Lord rebuke him: I beseech you *Sir*, remember them on that account, I shall do what I can to cut off all occasion by procuring something farther for Mr. *P.* to dispose of as he pleaseth; I am in hopes of something out of my Lord *Wharton's* Charity, but cannot yet get a positive Answer. I wonder sometimes that the Lord should encline you to take notice  
of



of such a one as I, to write to me so oft as you have done, but will you indeed bear me upon your warm Heart when you are at the Throne of Grace? I seriously beg you would, surely I am greatly needy, though unworthy of such a Favour, I have been smattering at Religion, indeed trifling with it for many years, for alas the truth is, I make e'en nothing of it to this day; O what a reproach am I to a dear Jesus, a head so full of influences, a root so full of sap, and to his Ministers and Ordinances I sit under! Corruptions and Temptations strong and oft prevailing, Grace ordinarily low and languishing, nay useless and unprofitable, poor, and yet upon all occasions (I should rather say, without any thing, that looks like a Colour for it) prone to be Proud! Will you not pity and pray for such an one? Alas Sir, the Lord knows I have told you true! And when you have leisure and opportunity, further refresh me with a line. But I will not detain you further but conclude here remaining dear Sir,

*very affectionately Your's, I. B.*

## LETTER XLIV.

To Mr. F. November, 14. 1696.

*Reverend and dear Sir,*

**Y**OUR'S dated the 6th. came safe to hand; I have not had any opportunity of sending any Books to you, and have been a little thoughtful, because I did not hear from you, send with great freedom, and the Lord prosper your pious Design. As to *Middleton*, my Father having an Interest in Mr. *White* (one concern

ed in disposing of my Lord *Whartons* large Charity ) I got him to write to him for some help there. His answer to my Father was, that as far as his Interest would go it should be laid out for us, at their next meeting, which would be shortly. I also wrote to him my Self, about ten day's or a fortnight since to put him in mind of it. I hope we shall speed, and as soon as I can hear from him Mr. P. shall know. I wrote to him about three weeks since, but perceive by yours, that mine was not come to his Hands. Upon your advice I wrote to them, to put Six poor Children to School, I suppose thus is, Three at *Elton*, I would have them continue and will pay for them, and when we see how we speed at *London*, shall know what to do more that way. Some things have been but imprudently managed, which hath been a trouble to me, methinks if Mr. P. had concerned himself a little more in Matters and informed me, it might have been prevented, I have been oft concerned for them of late, least our subtil Enemy should take the advantage to make any breach to the great prejudice of the Interest of the Gospel amongst them; dear Sir, way-lay him with your Prayers and good Advice, when you are among them, if you see any thing that looks that way: I write in hast, and will not detain you longer, but am very affectionately yours, I.B.

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LETTER XLV.

To Mr. L. April, 30. 1697.

Dear Sir,

I Was in hopes to have heard from you before this, but however I make bold to trouble you with a few lines to intimate our Friends desire

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fire at *Elton* together with my own, that you would please to think of settling among them; methinks your private Converse among them, might be many ways setting forward your Masters work. I know it will be grievous to you, to think of loosing the frequent advantages you now have of enjoying that holy Man's Company, who I question not hath most of your spare Hours, and possibly there may be other Reasons too, that may be ready to cast in a vote against it, but I need not tell you whole Interest must give way, when the great God's and our's comes to stand in Competition, and that when we sincerely serve him at the most self-denying rate, he will not yet see us losers by it in the End. And I do also with Submission heartily wish you would think of setting up on a Course of Catechising and Expounding it; there are divers good things extant that may make your Work easy; and in my Thoughts its a thing very needful, and which through the divine blessing might be of exceeding Advantage to them. You might these long Day's make room for it, by cutting your Afternoons Sermon a little shorter. The Lord direct and encline you that way which shall be most pleasing to him, and most profitable to precious Souls, and crown your endeavours with abundant Success! I should be glad to hear from you *who am your affectionate Friend and Servant,* I. B.

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LETTER XLVI.

To Mr. C. May, 11. 1697.

Good Mr. C.

I Must acknowledge, that I am a debter to you of a few Lines, I have not time now to write many,

many, and alas it was well for me if my justly grounded fears did not give me cause to say, that by taking up but a little time in writing, I shall thereby occasion you to throw away the less. Its sad indeed that a borderer upon Eternity (as I have reason to look upon my self) should have reason to talk at such a rate; but this, though it make it more sad, it doth not make it less true. While I complain of my Self I may not flatter you, but give me leave to say this, that both formerly, and when I was last with you, I could not but observe that in you, which gave me cause to think you was got before me (alas! How many could I name; and that such too. as have not had my advantages nor any thing near them, whom I once thought at least to have been some steps behind, who are now put before me!) But I must tell you, you have fresh ground enough before you still, therefore put on, you will have better company then by lagging behind with such as I. I am just now thinking what a change there is in the Season of the Year since I saw you. Then one had occasion to be thinking of that [ *He giveth Snow like Wool, he scattereth his Hoar frost like Ashes: He casteth forth his Ice like Morfels, who can stand before his Cold* ] But lo, now the Winter is past, the Rain is over and gone; the Flowers appear on the Earth, the time of the Singing of Birds is come, and the Voice of the Turtle is heard in our Lands. O that I could say so much of my Soul! But alas, though when I look into my Garden, or walk abroad the verdure and fragancy of a variety of Objects, inviting to entertain my outward Senses with delight, as also to raise my dull and heavy Heart,

to much more sweet, excellent and amiable ones, though these ( I say, ) tell me after another manner then my *Almanack* doth when I look without doors that its *May*, yet I am forced to think of another Month alas when I look within, sadly to complain of a long Winter still, at least of a very backward Spring; the Vines do not flourish, the tender Grapes appear, nor the Pomgranets bud forth, as the Lord might justly expect, after so much expence as he hath been at with me, nor any thing near it. When I examin Matters closely, what a poor little is that, which I have to shew for my being a Garden more then bare Enclosure? But if I should proceed on this melancholy Subject as I might, I should weary you, or possibly tempt you to think I do but counterfeit Complaints, or that Pride was but working in a more close and cunning way. Indeed who knows the depths of Deceit, that there are in such Hearts! May my Complaints be an occasion of your humble chearful Praises upon your own Account; may they also engage your fervent Prayers on mine. Arise O Son of righteousness with healing in thy Wings! Awake O North wind, and come thou South, blow upon our Gardens that the Spices thereof may flow out: Then let our beloved come into his Garden, and eat his pleasant Fruits. My true hearty Respects and Service to good Mr. C. accept the tender of the same your Self. I do not forget you, and should be glad to hear how it pleaseth the Lord to deal with you,

*who am your affectionate Friend  
and Servant, I. B.*

LETTER



LETTER XLVII.

To Mr. W. July, 20. 1697.

Dear Sir,

**I** Was happily surprized last Lord's day, Mr. W. going over those excellent close heart searching Truths again, which I was not long since speaking to you of; But I find this hath not satisfied my desire, but more encreased and enlarged it; and so both by my Father and self I did earnestly request his Publishing this Discourse, which he neither granted nor denied. Now this comes earnestly to entreat you to take my part herein. I never begged such a thing of him before, and shall be very loath to be denied. Indeed it would be a fond Conceit should I imagin that my Judgment or Opinion, should any way influence him in such a thing as this, I should be ashamed to pretend to it; but methinks this excellent universally useful thing, doth abundantly speak for it self, and I hope he will not by withholding rob the Church of it. I hope that which set him on work in studying and preaching, hath also set me on work in desiring its Publication. I am loath to give offence by my rudeness, and yet shall not be easily denied; but if he will deny me, I must take leave to set others on successively, such as I shall think more likely to speed. I am dear Sir your very affectionate Friend and Servant, I. B.

LETTER XLVIII.

To Mr. Edmund B. August 30. 1697.

SIR,

**I** Have received your kind Letter full of good Advice relating to that Affair I applied my self to

to you about, when I was in *L.* wherein you also put me in hopes of some Papers in a short time which will be further helpful, for which I return hearty thanks. Since my return from *L.* I have for some days been abroad in the Country, and since have been confined by bodily Distemper, so that I have had but little time, but have taken a few steps in that Business, and as soon as able shall endeavour to proceed according to your direction. My greatest discouragements are in and from my Self, when ever I set about any piece of Service, I am such a very sorry unworthy Instrument, that I am ready to fear that the Lord should utterly reject and throw me by, as one in whom he hath no Pleasure, though I must confess he hath sometimes graciously surprized me with the Country, and so I would encourage my Self humbly to attempt this also, earnestly begging that you and the Society would help me by your Prayers. Such a Master indeed deserves all the Service that we can ever do him, but such as I (if any such be) are unworthy of the Honour of being employ'd in the meanest Part of it. The first tidings I had of your pious undertaking was very pleasing to me, and the more so, because of that happy Union of Persons of different Perswasions in your Societies; and truly in my small observation of the rising Generation looking towards Religion, this is one thing which methinks looks not a little comfortably, that they seem to be laying aside much of that narrowness of mind, which truly both sides have generally been too chargeable with, and to be approaching to a more truly Catholick temper, a thing which bodes no small good (I hope) to our Church and Nation. But  
herein

herein (which is a ground for a further discouragement) you have much the advantage of us in the Country, however if the God of Heaven will but be with us to prosper us, we may thence take Heart to arise and build, I thank you for the liberty you give me of holding a correspondence with you about this Affair. I shall make bold to trouble you, as no doubt we shall have frequent occasion especially at first, and shall be glad to hear of your Affairs. But I am afraid you will think me tedious, so heartily wishing that Heavens blessing may abide upon your Persons and pious Undertaking I conclude remaining,  
*Sir, your affectionate and obliged Friend and Ser. I. B.*

LETTER XLIX.

To Mr. B. January, 5. 1697.

*Reverend Sir,*

AS to the Affairs of your Society for Reformation here in this place (blessed be God) they go on pretty well, fresh Members are almost weekly added to us, and a considerable Number of Profane Persons have been brought to legal Punishments, the good Effects of, which do already begin to appear; we are resolved (the Lord enabling of us) to prosecute this Matter with utmost vigour, and hope in about a Months time to set up a publick Lecture on this occasion, designing to have eight Sermons preached to us in the Year, by Conformists and Nonconformists in their turns, and think to have our Sermons printed, as that may be a means further to spread and propagate the thing. And being now (blessed be God) pretty well settled in our gears here, I look on it as my Duty to use my utmost endeavours to promote this highly necessary good Work else where also, and among other Places hath for some time been in my Eye. Now dear *Sir*, I entreat you  
to

to move this Business to some of your People with pressing Importunity, and may they not as well hear the Lord thus bespeaking them, who is on my side, who? And let none of them be backward to come forth to his help; and if a few hearty, prudent, active Persons would but appear, they may promise themselves all the brotherly Assistance that poor I am capable of, giving them as to Rules, both for the forming and governing a Society of this nature (with some other things that may be serviceable to them) according to our Practice here, and the best Instructions I have had from the Societies in *London*. Formidable difficulties will I doubt not present themselves, but let not these discourage them, hearten them on, the Lord can easily help them through them, I speak from mine own and others experience who have adventured before them, and I durst give it under my Hand that he will. I doubt not but to put them into a Method, to engage both Magistrates and Clergy to own and countenance them in it; bid them not fear, but be strong and work, for the Lord our G. is with us, and will own and prosper us in this thing, I promise my self an easy pardon for this Trouble, and shall hope for your speedy Answer; the Lord send a comfortable one! And if so, I shall speedily give you my Thoughts more particularly about this Affair. I have written to *York* to the same effect, and hope I shall have a demonstration of the greater forwardness of our Friends at *Hull* in a more ready Compliance. I have a Letter from Mr. *Fern* yesterday intimating their ready Compliance with the like motion at *Chesterfield* and importuning help, I hope I shall be able in a short time to give you an account of its being actually set on Foot there, and in divers other places hereabouts, and I would not have my *Hull* Friends the last that engage in this most noble Quarrel,

I am dear Sir,  
your affectionate Friend  
and Servant, L. B.

F I N I S.

